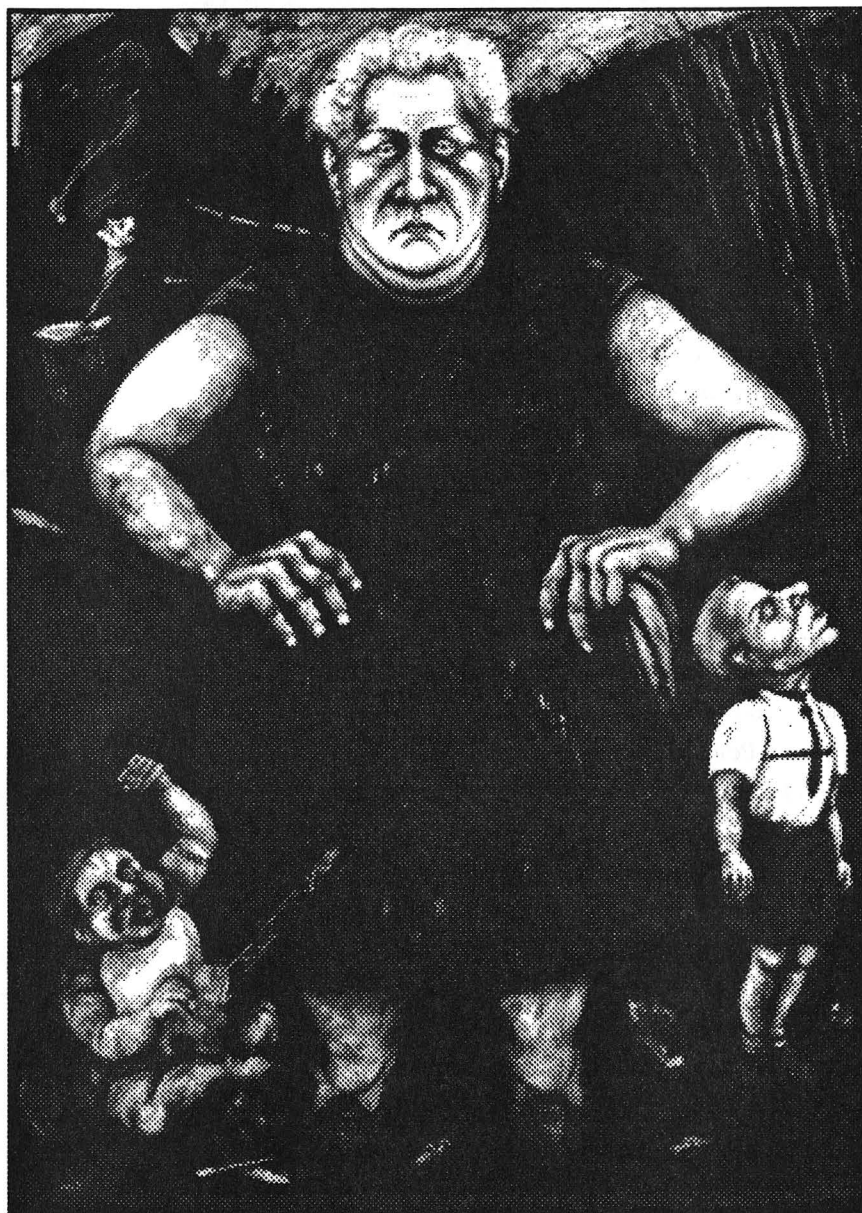


British Association for Irish Studies

Newsletter

Issue No 8 Winter 1995



In this issue

- Paul Bew on the Peace Process
- John Ardagh Interview
- Sunderland Conference/London Lectures
- News, Views and Reviews

BAIS Newsletter No.8 Winter 1995

Editors' Introduction	1
Building on Success	2
FEATURES	
Seizing the Interval	3-5
John Ardagh Interview	6-8
Irish Studies and the Problem of Identity	10-11
An Tréigint Agus An tAitheantas	12
BAIS COUNCIL ACTIVITIES	
BAIS Lecture Series Spring 1996 in Manchester	9
Queen's Colleges: The Sesquicentenary Lectures	13
BAIS Conference in Sunderland	14-15
BAIS Irish Language and Culture Conference in Coventry	16
CONFERENCES AND REVIEWS	
Irish Strand in Fin de Siecle Conference in Bath	17
ACIS and CAIS in Belfast	18
Making Connections at Sheffield	19
MA in British and Irish Art in Nottingham	20
Cascando: Culture, Creativity and Criticism	21
Poetic Land - Political Territory: Irish Art in London	22
Television Famine	23
Writing Out of Ireland Conference at Strawberry Hill	24
Seamus Heaney: Nobel Laureate	25
BAIS ACCOUNTS, MEMBERSHIP AND RESEARCH INDEX	
Treasurer's Report	26
BAIS Council Contacts	27
BAIS Application Form	31
Membership Subscription Rates, Council Meetings and AGM for 1996	32
Research/Interests Index Form	33
CONTRIBUTORS & LATE NEWS	
Contributors	28
Musical Finale to Lecture Series at UNL	29
Festival of Irish Cinema at Hammersmith	30

Designed by Ian Mitchell and Ruth Mellor

The Media Production Unit, St Mary's University College, Strawberry Hill, Twickenham.

Printed by Newline Commercial Print Ltd., Bath.

Editors' Introduction



Welcome to a bumper edition of the BAIS *Newsletter*. We are delighted to report a healthy response to requests for material and to have secured some significant feature items. Our thanks go to all our regular contributors on the BAIS Council for their reports and to those who have sent in unsolicited material. This *Newsletter* reflects the increased profile of BAIS activities over the last half year and brings news of further events planned for 1996. The BAIS conference in Sunderland produced a range of stimulating papers. Neil Sammells has asked us to remind delegates that he will consider conference papers for publication in *Irish Studies Review* providing that they are written up in an appropriate style and format for *ISR*.

Our special thanks go to Rita Duffy for her generous permission to use 'Mother Ulster' for our front cover. We are only sorry that finances prevent us from doing it full justice with a colour reproduction. On matters of production, it is worth reminding would-be contributors amongst the membership that typed contributions or items on disc are essential to speed up the process of putting the *Newsletter* together. If you are using discs, please use Word for Windows. Keep the text as plain as possible and avoid unnecessary enhancements because lay-out is finally done on PageMaker 5. Please also send us a hard copy of your item in case we hit problems. Photos are most welcome. These can be sent in as prints or slides for scanning. Publicity images and logos should be supplied to us as tiff files. We will post discs, prints and slides back to you but it's as well for you to keep a copy. We are looking for contributions of 500 words (reviews, reports), or between 1,000 and 2,000 (for articles, interviews, etc.). It is pleasing to see so many new initiatives promoting

the study of Ireland in educational courses, conferences and lecture series. We will endeavour to mention any item to publicise an event that you are organising, but if you would like to have a boxed advert all we ask is for you to send us the price of a membership (£20) or persuade a colleague to join the BAIS instead! (cheques payable to BAIS). Remember that the *Newsletter* reaches upwards of 250 people who could be future students, conference delegates or potential sponsors.

The BAIS is going to start up a research index of its current membership. If you would like your name and interests published in *Newsletter* 9, please complete the form at the back of this issue and return it by **29 March 1996**. This should provide a valuable means of networking within the Association.

Lance would like to finish on a personal note by mentioning the untimely death of Augustine Martin in October. I was one of Gus's postgraduate students at UCD in 1985. He gave me a warm welcome, was generous with his time and gave me a start in teaching within the Department. His knowledge of Yeats and Stephens is renowned and he did a great deal during his lifetime to promote the study of Anglo-Irish literature through his teaching, on television, in publications, conferences and summer schools. His support, encouragement and great energies will be sorely missed.

Deadline for contributions to Issue 9 is **May 10th 1996**.

Lance Pettit and Madeleine Casey

Building on Success

It is extremely pleasing to be able to report that endeavours of members of Council have resulted in the delivery of a successful Autumn programme of events. You will read elsewhere in the *Newsletter* reports of the events themselves: the BAIS Biennial Irish Studies Conference, the lecture series to commemorate the foundation of the Queen's Colleges (now QUB, UCC, and UCG), and the Association's annual Irish-language and Culture Conference. It only remains for me to thank the members of Council with primary responsibility for the organisation of these events, Eleanor Burgess, Bob Bell and Kate Thompson, respectively, on behalf of the Association. I wish to thank also the many others who contributed to the success of these events. Among these I wish to mention especially Professor Tony Hepburn and his helpers who gave tremendous support in the organisation of the Biennial Conference and throughout the conference itself, the Irish Embassy which hosted a conference reception, AIB Bank which sponsored the Queen's Colleges lecture series, and the committee of alumni of the Irish universities - chaired by Ivan Connor of the London QUB Association - which assisted in the planning and running of the series. We are also grateful to *The Irish Post* for publicising and reporting these events, and to the alumni associations and Uni-Link for assistance in publicising the Queen's lectures.

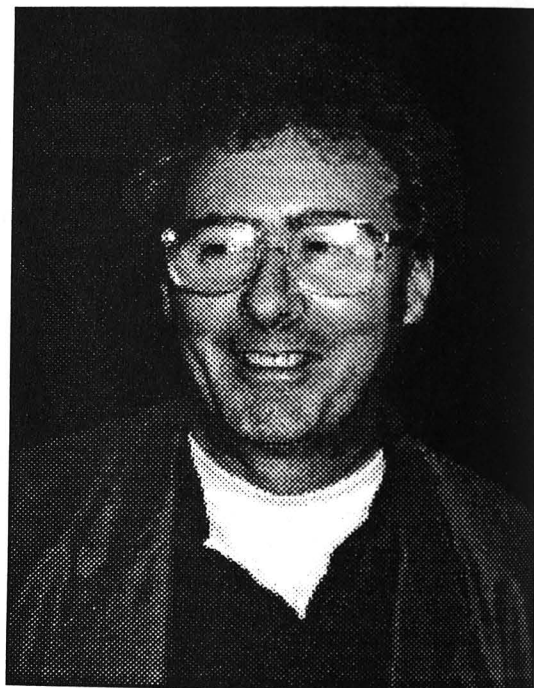
We were very pleased that two of the patrons of the Association, Sir David Orr and Mr Robert Kee, were associated with these activities through their chairing of individual lectures in the Queen's Colleges series, and that one of the lectures was given by Professor Marianne Elliott who made a major contribution to the early development of the Association. The newly appointed Irish ambassador, Mr Ted Barrington, with Mrs Barrington, and the Deputy Under Secretary at the Northern Ireland Office, Mr Quentin Thomas, were present at individual lectures in the Queen's Colleges series, and we thank them for their interest.

In addition to the above, I have to report that new membership procedures are now in place, thanks largely to the efforts of our Treasurer, Tom Dooley. Membership as you will see from his report, is in a healthy state. In addition to thanking Tom, on your behalf, I also want to thank Lance Pettitt and Madeleine Casey yet again for their excellent work on the *Newsletter*.

The programme of activity outlined above, has served to raise the profile of the Association substantially.

As to the future, following on the success of the Queen's Colleges series, we are considering the possibility of an annual BAIS London lecture in association with the alumni associations of the Irish universities; and Council member Mervyn Busteed is currently planning the 1996 BAIS Lectures, which will take place in Manchester. Two projected initiatives have been delayed, but will be pursued: a consultation of members and ex-members by questionnaire and the compilation of a register of members' teaching and research interests, to be published in the *Newsletter*.

Finally, we have just received news of grants from the Ireland Fund of Great Britain towards our Famine project and towards our Irish language programme.



Seán Hutton

Seizing the Interval - The Northern Ireland Peace Process

There is no doubt about it: we are at a tricky and difficult stage of the peace process. In early September, a proposed Anglo-Irish summit was called off and there is as yet no decisive indication that a new summit can be usefully held, although the mood began to change in the middle of November. At the heart of all this is the so-called twin track process; the two governments sponsoring wide-ranging 'talks about talks' while a commission on arms ran in parallel. Then the two governments would move to substantive round-table talks, but only after some decommissioning had taken place. This was a delicate formula; many unionists regard it as a betrayal - what is the difference, they say, between 'talks about talks' and 'real talks'? But in the end it was the republican movement who found the proposals most radically unacceptable, leading to the collapse of the summit and the present impasse. The republicans are also increasingly unhappy about the attitude of the Irish government. This attitude goes back a long way. In August 1994 John Bruton denounced: 'The tactical laying aside of arms with the implied threat of a resumption ... it would be an appalling development if Sinn Féin was able to use the situation to garner political advantage'. *An Phoblacht* then criticised Bruton for being 'more unionist than some unionists'. Bruton's recent refusal (on 13 October 1994) to meet John Hume and Gerry Adams has upset many. *An Phoblacht*, at the end of October, commented angrily on Bruton's behaviour:

'If the test of acceptability to unionists had been applied to each stage of the peace process so far we would still be in an armed conflict situation. Indeed, if that was the test we would still have a unionist parliament in Stormont and the B-Specials on the streets'.

But all the signs are that John Bruton is sticking to his attempt at an even handed approach. To sustain it, however, he will need a more supple and imaginative response from the Ulster Unionists; so far we have seen the beginning of that, but only the beginning. But to understand why the Taoiseach feels as he does, it is necessary to recall the events of the summer of 1995.

Nationalist Ireland convinced itself that Britain had introduced a 'new precondition' - that of arms decommissioning before the calling of all-party round-table

talks. In fact, as early as 10 October 1993 on RTÉ, and in BBC interviews in and around the Downing Street Declaration, Sir Patrick Mayhew had made it clear that a 'permanent' renunciation of violence meant the handing over of arms before talks. This was, in fact, the firm position of both governments. On 15 December 1993 the Downing Street Declaration said that what is required to enter the talks process is the permanent end of the use of, or support for, paramilitary violence; in these circumstances, democratically mandated parties which establish a commitment to exclusively peaceful methods and which have shown that they abide by the democratic process, are free to participate fully in democratic politics and to join in dialogue in due course between the governments and the political parties on the way ahead.

In the Dáil, Irish Foreign Affairs Minister Dick Spring glossed that an end to violence would involve paramilitaries handing over their arms. This was the meaning of 'permanence':

'Questions were raised on how to determine a permanent cessation of violence. We are talking about the handing up of arms and are insisting that it would not be simply a temporary cessation of violence to see what the political process offers. There can be no equivocation in relation to the determination of both governments in that regard'.

(Dáil Debates, Vol 437, c 776)

Later, in the same vein, on 1 June 1994, in the Dáil Dick Spring stated that the key to Sinn Féin joining political discussions is a permanent cessation of violence.

He continued:

'There will have to be a verification of the handing over of arms. As I have said publicly on many occasions, there is little point in attempting to bring people into political dialogue if they are doing so on the basis of giving it a try and if it does not work, returning to the bomb and the bullet. It has to be permanent and there must be evidence of it ... There will obviously have to be a precise means of establishing the commitment to use exclusively peaceful methods and that obviously has to be decided and agreed by both governments.'

'There can be no participation by Sinn Féin/IRA in political discussions with either government until they have made a very firm commitment that the violence has ended'.

(Dáil Debates, Vol 443, c 1021-22)

In response to all this Gerry Adams angrily commented in an interview with the *Irish News* (8 January 1994):

'Mr Mayhew goes on to say, "Well, the exploratory dialogue will be so we can discuss with Sinn Fein how the IRA will hand over their weapons." So I say to myself, "This is what they want. They want the IRA to stop so that Sinn Fein can have the privilege 12 weeks later, having been properly sanitised and come out of quarantine, to have discussions with civil servants on how the IRA can hand over their weapons." Mr Adams added: "I hear that reiterated again and again by Douglas Hurd, John Major, by Patrick Mayhew."

But this did not stop him writing in the *Irish Times* on 14 July 1995:

'For its part, the British government have made an issue to decommissioning in the run-up to the IRA cessation as it knew perfectly well that this was an unrealistic demand. London knew that there would not have been a cessation if this demand had been made a precondition for talks. Nowhere in public statements nor in the course of dialogue and exchanges between the British government and Sinn Fein over a two-year period prior to the IRA cessation was this made an issue either as a precondition or otherwise.'

Unionists then watched on aghast as an entire national political community seemed to take a conscious decision to steep itself in self-deception. Archbishop Connell of Dublin, forced to account for the contradictions in his public statements, would have been forgiven for looking on in surprise as not a single journalist out of all Ireland's large, able, and at times self-admiring, press corps asked Gerry Adams about the outright conflict between his *Irish News* interview of January 1994 and his *Irish Times* article of 14 July 1995. Few were willing to query the Tanaiste either about his views of 15 December 1993 or 1 June 1994. Instead, everyone insisted that the British had dishonestly introduced a new precondition. The reason is not hard to find - the theme of 'perfidious Albion' is a traditional one in Irish life and many are comfortable with it. They are less comfortable with the espousal of a brutal *real politik* which asks others to negotiate at a disadvantage or under threat. A northern republican explicitly told Suzanne Breen of the *Irish Times*: 'Why should nationalists give away their main wedge?' But few in the broader Irish nationalist community would use such language; rather they argue with complete sincerity that the violence is over for good. But, however understandable all this is in human or historical terms, it has not helped the real 'peace process' which must be based on the growth of trust between the two communities. For an entire summer large elements of mainstream Irish nationalism behaved as if words or solemn commitments given in the past meant nothing. They thus confirmed the suspicion of the most

reactionary and neanderthal elements in the unionist community. Worse than this was the growing obsession - apparently supported by some of the most influential figures in Dublin political life - that the British should be persuaded to use economic pressure (a reduction of the subvention perhaps) to bring the unionists to the table. Apart from the obvious fact that such moves would inevitably hit poor Catholics the hardest, these ideas are undoubtedly the very opposite of the type of thinking which is needed to underpin a genuine reconsideration. It is clear that Mr Bruton has seen the dangerous implications of these developments and whilst he is sensitive to the republican leadership's genuine difficulty over the arms question, he is also sensitive to the position of the unionist leadership. But will such sensitivity be of any avail in the end?

This poses an obvious question - what are the implications of David Trimble's election as leader of the Ulster Unionist party? Since the retirement of Garret FitzGerald and the death of John Kelly there has been a gap for the role of 'intellectual in Irish politics'. Trimble recalls both: he is as well read as FitzGerald while he also has some of the sharpness of John Kelly, a fellow academic lawyer. He is a good speaker but by no means a great one. He has not yet learnt to vary his voice. His first speech as conference leader reads well but went on too long and was hardly a pleasure to listen to. His forays into 'amateur' historical writing are not without subtlety and certainly not 'gung ho'. It is a rather wry David Trimble who wrote so shrewdly about the home rule issue of 1912-14:

'There is a unionist myth about the Ulster crisis. It is that gallant Ulster took a stand, armed itself for the fight and its opponents in London backed down and its enemies in Ireland were defeated'.

For northern nationalists, of course, David Trimble will always be seen in the context of the sectarian emotion unleashed at Drumcree, Portadown, in the summer of 1995. They find it hard to take seriously his subsequent prospect of the modernisation of unionism as exemplified in his move to transform the 'Orange' link. How could the Ulster Unionist party elect such a man, they ask. They had, after all, the choice of a 'liberal' in Ken Maginness (otherwise the most popular unionist politician with both protestant and catholic according to the recent *Sunday Tribune* poll) or the highly experienced John Taylor whose more recent speeches have seemed to some to possess a certain statesmanlike quality. But the unionists were hungry for an articulate energetic leader to put their case - just as Fianna Fail was when it

selected Charles Haughey even after the affair of the arms trial.

Trimble has set a cracking pace. The first leader of Ulster unionism to meet with a Taoiseach in 20 years, he has also been to the White House. He has not moved from the Spring-Mayhew Downing Street Declaration position on arms. What was good enough for them is good enough for him, he asserts. In the short term, his realistic objective is not to make the Unionist party attractive to Catholics (this is a highly utopian project) but to make it more attractive for intelligent Protestants. This is the real reason why he has pushed the pace on the Orange link - to the distaste of traditionalists like Martin Smyth and Willie Ross. He has proposed an elected convention to deal with both internal Northern Irish matters and also north/south relations as a means of allowing Sinn Féin to come in from the cold - assuming, as is likely, they won their seats on a mandate of purely peaceful means. Both John Hume and Gerry Adams have rejected this notion. Some speculate that Sinn Féin may be a little worried about its current electoral strength or about an increase in intra-nationalist division at the hustings, but whatever the reason, the British government is unlikely to run with the proposal - despite support from centrists such as the Alliance party - in the face of such strong nationalist opposition. But although the Ulster Unionists are highly suspicious of the British

government's resolve on the arms issue - so many cracks in it have already appeared - London is quite genuine in not wanting to call round table talks on a basis which ensures empty unionist seats at that table. Given its own record of firm pronouncements on the arms issue, it is difficult to see it doing so with any real credibility if the republican movement does not move on the issue. Mr Trimble, therefore, probably has the capacity to ensure, if he so wants it, that there can be no serious talks until after the republicans have acquired a new mandate at the next general election. The question remains: is such a delay in his own interests or the interests of others? In particular, even if talks with Sinn Féin are politically impossible at present, are there not important matters to be discussed in detail with Mr Bruton in the immediate future?

The words of the 'Orange' unionist Reverend William Shaw Kerr BD, Rector of Seapatricks, written on the eve of the Easter Rising, 1916, in the *Irish Church Quarterly*, have an eerie resonance:

'Only by doing justice to the principles and ideas of both sides can any feasible attempt be made to bring about a compromise that may obviate the unutterable tragedy of a civil war. We have had the narrowest escapes from such a catastrophe. Are we not to seize the interval to bring about a peaceful solution? I cannot imagine any patriot declining the task.'

Paul Bew

UNDERSTANDING THE PEACE PROCESS IN IRELAND

Weekly Seminar Series during 1996 at the University of Salford

(4 pm Wednesdays, Pankhurst Room, Research and Graduate College)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>14 Feb Eric Illsley MP, <i>Labour Northern Ireland</i>
<i>Front Bench Spokesperson</i>
LABOUR'S APPROACH TO THE PEACE PROCESS</p> <p>21 Feb Prof Brendan O'Leary, <i>University of Western Ontario</i>
UNDERSTANDING NORTHERN IRELAND</p> <p>28 Feb Councillor Gregory Campbell,
<i>Democratic Unionist Party, Security Spokesperson</i>
THE DUP AND THE PEACE PROCESS</p> <p>6 Mar Dr Sean Farren, <i>SDLP, Economic Spokesperson</i>
THE SDLP'S APPROACH TO THE PEACE PROCESS</p> <p>13 Mar Dr Paddy Hillyard, <i>University of Bristol</i>
SECURITY AND THE PEACE PROCESS</p> <p>20 Mar David Ervine, <i>Leader of the Progressive Unionist Party</i>
THE PROGRESSIVE UNIONIST PARTY AND
THE PEACE PROCESS</p> | <p>27 Mar Prof Steve Bruce, <i>University of Aberdeen</i>
THE FUTURE OF LOYALISM</p> <p>1 May Dr James McAuley, <i>University of Huddersfield</i>
A BIRD WITH ONE WING CAN'T FLY:
LOYALIST PERCEPTIONS OF THE PEACE PROCESS</p> <p>8 May Mark Ryan, <i>Author of War and Peace in Ireland</i>
THE LANGUAGE OF PEACE</p> <p>15 May Chris Gilligan, <i>University of Salford</i>
PEACE OR PACIFICATION PROCESS? STATE AND
COMMUNITY RELATIONS IN NORTHERN IRELAND</p> <p>22 May Dr Alan Greer, <i>University of the West of England</i>
CROSS-BORDER CO-OPERATION AND THE
PEACE PROCESS</p> |
|--|--|

For further details, contact: Dr Jon Tongue, Department of Politics and Contemporary History, University of Salford, The Crescent, Salford, M5 4WT Tel: 0161-745-5000 or Fax: 0161-745-5077

John Ardagh - In Conversation

John Ardagh recently published the paperback of his book *Ireland and the Irish* (Penguin, 1995). In November he talked with Madeleine Casey about his work and his view of the country.

MC *First of all I would like to say I did enjoy reading your book.*

JA Oh good

MC *What was the readership you were aiming at?*

JA I've written similar books on France and Germany and it's really the same readership as those which is sixth form and university level. Also, the intelligent tourist who wants something other than just a travel book.

MC *It does seem to assume that people do not have a prior knowledge.*

JA I think so. I mean who am I to tell the Irish about themselves, really? And, in fact, quite a lot of those Irish people who think it's addressed to the Irish think that I'm being patronising. I find the Irish are terribly critical of themselves and each other but they don't like being criticised from the outside, particularly not by an Englishman, even an Englishman with Irish roots like me.

MC *I would like to know why a book on the Irish?*

JA It was my publisher who said why not do Ireland. I leapt at the idea because I have some Irish roots on my father's side.

MC *So it was out of a certain sense of kinship.*

JA I felt a certain kinship but I didn't know it nearly as well as I knew France or Germany. And I still don't. France is my real subject and Germany is my second subject, and Ireland is my third subject, you might say.

MC *How did you go about your research and how long did it take?*

JA Going about it was purely journalistic. I am a journalist, not an academic. So I use purely journalistic techniques for what they are worth, which is that of the foot-in-the-door approach, you know, the push. And very much based on field research. Using that kind of technique it snowballs very rapidly. Each person you see gives you ten

other people to see. If the book has a weakness in its research, which of course it does, it's that I didn't see enough bottom people. I met all the top people, and it was very easy to go from one top person to another: Mary Robinson, Albert Reynolds, Gay Byrne etc.

MC *I did expect interviews with more of a cross section of people, including the working class.*

JA There are some but I would tend rather to go to the pundits who know about the working class or the rural west, rather than to the peasants or the workers themselves. So, for instance, in Finglas, in the Dublin suburbs, I was taken round by Dermot Bolger. And I felt a strong identity with him, we're both writers. I like his work very much, he's a very sympathetic chap and he told me all about Finglas.

MC *Aren't you quite critical of him in your book?*

JA Oh no! Bolger was one of my great heroes in that book. I wasn't critical of Bolger!

MC *Didn't you say that Bolger overdid things a bit, especially when writing about, for example the drug scene in Dublin.*

JA Well, I loved that book *THE JOURNEY HOME*. But yes, it was a bit over the top but it was meant to have a poetic, epic scale to it, which made it over the top. I thought it was a wonderful poetic allegory of modern Ireland. The point I was making was that I let Bolger take me round and talk to me about Finglas rather than doing it myself. In the rural west, I saw a lot of pundits who are dealing with rural development. I did go and see some farmers but they were ones who were selected for me by my contact in Dublin. The field research took me about four or five months.

MC *There are so many things I would like to ask you about in the book, but with the restrictions of time the things I am going to ask you about are those points I did not agree with. One of the things you come back to often in the book is what you call the Irish lack of a strong visual sense. Could you explain what you mean?*

JA Compared with a lot of other countries, I think it's true. I would like to preface it by saying of course they have a fantastic verbal sense in all ways; wonderful with words both the written and the spoken word; and traditional music;

and theatre...

MC *I would say that writers need a strong visual sense. Irish writing is very imagistic.*

JA I would say the strength of Irish writing is more in character, dialogue, anecdote. I would say that was the forte of Irish writing rather than descriptive writing. There is very little good architecture in Ireland other than that of the Anglo-Irish which is just the sort of country homes you might expect. A lot of Dublin has been spoilt (sic). I think it's great weakness of visual taste, also a weakness of the strength of public opinion. I find there's something a bit depressing about a lot of Irish architecture, particularly in small towns and villages. It's a question of lack of feeling for that sort of thing. If you got to a lot of other countries you find there is a neatness and a smartness and a positive thing that I find lacking in Ireland visually.

MC *You talk in your book about Ireland becoming a more secular society and that could lead to a moral vacuum. I wonder if it's not more a matter of people taking responsibility for their lives rather than passing it over to a God?*

JA Yes, that's another way of looking at it certainly. But you can't leave out a public/social morality. OK, people are taking more responsibility individually for their lives, particularly Irish women (and I say some good things about Irish women, don't I?) And I think that's great but there's a bit of a public moral vacuum, you find it in other countries too. In Ireland, what has happened is the Catholic ethic is in full retreat and nothing very much has taken its place because it has always been one of individual salvation, more than the Protestant ethic which is a work ethic which comes from a liberal tradition, it therefore fits more easily into a lay society. In the Catholic church, its decline of morality leaves nothing very much else. Because its morality was so dominating, withdraw it and what else do people turn to?

MC *People turn back to their own resources.*

JA Yes, individually that may be fine but it means there is not the public sense that you need. The Irish tend to leave it to the Church to do the welfare things or they leave it to the government which probably doesn't do them at all or does them wrong.

MC *But when it does come to major decisions or constitutional changes to be made then it does go to the*

people.

JA Oh, there are referenda but they're organised by the Government. People don't get up and organise their own pressure groups to ensure things get done or to keep tabs on politicians.

MC *You often bring up the self absorption of the Irish, how that is reflected in their creative writing?*

JA Yes. An awful lot of writing is on very Irish themes, looking at Irish society, or looking at the Irish character.

MC *I would suggest that Irish self absorption or reflection in the writing has a universality, not least in its themes of land, freedom, cultural identity. You say that the Irish are always referring back to themselves when discussing world affairs, like Bosnia or suchlike. Isn't that more empathising than self absorption?*

JA I think that's a bit much. Intellectually and morally speaking, it should be possible to feel empathy, sympathy for a cause abroad, a tragedy going on somewhere, without having to relate it to yourself. I quoted one or two examples. I was talking to a highly educated professor-type in Cork and she said "Well, we're very interested in famine in Somalia and Ethiopia because of course it reminds us our own famine." Well that's all very well but it ought to be possible to be concerned about famine in Somalia or wherever without having had a famine at home. Maybe all peoples are like this, but the Irish are very self consciously Irish.

MC *I would see that more as empathising rather than self absorption.*

JA The Irish are extremely welcoming to foreign tourists. They don't have the xenophobia towards Europeans that you find quite a lot in this country. But they are very incurious about those peoples, about those countries.

MC *Wouldn't you say a lot of that is to do with the fact that it's a fairly recent post-colonial society?*

JA Oh I think that is the reason. An island colonised for a long time is bound to have this self-absorption. That's the explanation. I just think that it should be waning more than it is after seventy years.

MC *One of the things you mention in your introduction and bring up later is the question of the language, that the Irish actually connived, you do use the word 'connived', with the English in its loss.*

JA I think they did. I'm not a great expert on history but I think they could have kept it going much more than they did. They found it more convenient to speak English and they found it a form of social progress as English was the official language imposed by the coloniser.

MC *That's the word: it was 'imposed'.*

JA Well, they could have resisted it much more than they did.

MC *When Cromwell went across it was to Hell or Connaught you go and the only way to survive if you didn't want to go to hell or Connaught was to learn English. You used the quote 'the Irish doesn't sell a cow' and if you can't sell the cow you can't eat. And there were hedge schools. I don't think it was an easy time at all and if people were going to get ahead they had to speak English. They were satirised by the poets for speaking English but I don't think they had a choice.*

JA Yes, but anyway I think it's a pity the language had died out.

MC *I was interested in the statistics you came up with that 12% of the Welsh still speak their language compared to 1% of Irish*

JA Far more in Wales but of course they've got more incentive to keep it alive, it's a focus of nationalism.

MC *They weren't oppressed like the Irish. There is a view that the Irish have taken the English language and reinvented it.*

JA A bit

MC *Particularly in literature, I would say.*

JA Well, it's a regional language like the English spoken in various parts of America. There are a few words that we don't have like 'craic' and the use of the word 'after': "I'm after fancying you", which doesn't make sense in English, does it?

MC *You deal with Northern Ireland quite extensively.*

JA That chapter is out of date. I added a postscript which deals with the peace process. Nonetheless, I think the chapter does give a very fair view of what the situation was like there shortly before the ceasefire.

MC *You do not see Northern Ireland as a colonial*

situation.

JA No, it's not! Some silly people in the Sinn Féin and the IRA think so but it's not colonial. The British would love to get out.

MC *But the fact is that they are there.*

JA They are there purely out of a sense of duty. They came in and imposed direct rule to help the Catholics much more than to help the Protestants, didn't they?

MC *Yes, but they created the whole situation.*

JA A long time ago, yes, but the motivation for the British being in Ireland in 1910 or whenever is far different to the motivation of the British being in Northern Ireland today. It has turned round. It's the opposite situation. The British would love to get out of Northern Ireland if they felt they decently could.

MC *But they do have a duty to Northern Ireland, of course. I feel you are quite lenient on the British government with regard to Northern Ireland in the book. It has taken twenty five years to bring about this ceasefire.*

JA Well, they have been trying. Maybe they could have tried harder and sooner. I'm not very lenient on the army. I'm quite critical of them. I think they behaved very stupidly in many respects which of course provoked the Catholic population, some of them, to support the IRA much more than they would have done otherwise. The British record has been pretty good in the seventies and eighties and has helped the Catholic population a lot, which they know full well, that's why a high percentage of Catholics in the North don't want to join a united Ireland now. They're happy with what they've got.

MC *And the South doesn't want them either.*

JA I feel that situation is not urgent so long as they ceasefire can hold, it isn't urgent to find a final settlement because the present situation is OK. It costs a bit to the British but we can afford that, it doesn't really cost very much.

MC *A final question. You say of Louis MacNeice that he had 'as exasperated, critical affection' for Ireland and I wondered if you feel the same?*

JA Yes, certainly I would say that's my feeling but I'm not as close to it as him I'm a bit more of an outsider.

BAIS Lecture Series February - March 1996 Manchester

A Series of BAIS lectures will form part of Manchester's Irish Festival in Spring 1996.

Amongst the speakers are:

Rev Dr John Dunlop
(former Moderator,
Presbyterian Church in Ireland)
'Presbyterianism and the Situation in Ireland'

Dr Mairead Nic Craith
(Institute of Irish Studies,
University of Liverpool)
'The Irish Language Today'

Mr Mervyn Busted
(Department of Geography,
University of Manchester)
'The Irish in Nineteenth Century Manchester'

Dr Margaret Ward
(Bath College of Higher Education)
'Irish Women and Irish Nationalism'

Venue:
The Muriel Stott Lecture Theatre,
Manchester University.

Time:
All lectures will begin at 7.30 pm.

For further details contact:
Mervyn Busted, Department of
Geography, University of Manchester,
Manchester M13 9PL Tel: 0161-275-3623



The English Department
LSU College of Higher Education
The Avenue, Southampton SO17 1BG

*The college offers the following
two Irish Modules within the
distance learning MA in*
**LITERATURE, HISTORY
AND CULTURE**

RENAISSANCE AND REBELLION:
Ireland 1891 - 1916

IRELAND'S ULSTER CRISIS:
*Politics and Literature in Ireland
since 1969*

*In the undergraduate BA and
BAQTS courses
two modules are offered*

IRISH LITERATURE 1890 - 1960
IRISH LITERATURE 1960 - 1995

For further details please contact
Bernard Tucker
Head of English Department
LSU College of Higher Education

Tel: 0703-228761 Ext 2220

Fax: 0703-230944

e-mail: bernardt@tcp.co.uk

Irish Studies and the Problem of Identity

Being London-born of Irish parents and at one time a mature student, Madeleine Casey's article, 'Pathfinders', and Luc Giraud-Guigues' essay 'The Irish Language in London' (Newsletter, No.7, Summer 1995) triggered thoughts about 'British-Irish' identity. I wondered what it meant and what its implications were and how it might influence, or be influenced by, the study of Irish-related disciplines.

The concept of 'identity' is a complex one. *Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary* defines it as the 'state of being the same; sameness; individuality; personality; who or what a person or thing is'. A person's identity is therefore constructed from characteristics shared by all those who belong to a community (sameness), and from the nature of his or her own personality which differentiates him or her from others in that community (individuality).

A survey commissioned by the University of Bradford, conducted by ICM Research, and serialised in the *Irish Post* (19th November 1994 to 4th February 1995), noted that:

'social identity comes in great part from whatever community people may have been brought up in and feel they belong to; it is underpinned by positive views of that community as well as by traits that its members believe they share; it is nourished by association with other community members; and, in the case of an ethnic community, it usually includes a will to visit a land of common origin.'

Over the last 150 years, according to the report, Irish migrants to Britain have 'by and large...assimilated to the host community', but 'more roots of identity may have survived than is commonly believed'. This is especially true of the second and third generations. In answer to the question 'What is your Nationality?' around 19% of responders with one Irish parent or with Irish grandparents, said Irish. But 48% of those with two Irish parents, said they were Irish, 38% said they were British, and the remainder said they were either English or Scottish.

In Britain, Irish social and personal identity is maintained through contact with others of the same culture. The survey found that people of Irish descent mix more with Irish people than with the general population. Music is a significant factor in identifying with a common culture, and a high number of

Irish-related respondents also had vital memories of their history. Many British-Irish visit Ireland, and have strongly positive views of Ireland and the Irish.

Coming from the southern Catholic variety of Irish culture, my own childhood experience conformed with this pattern. My parents, aunts, cousins, and friends of my parents, for whom jobs had been found by my father, lived in the same house, or in the same street or nearby when they were able to rent their own property. I visited relatives in Ireland and they were frequent visitors to us in Britain. My parents were committed to their faith and I was obliged to attend Mass regularly. I was educated in Catholic schools, my fellow-students and the teachers being mostly either of Irish descent or Irish-born. My mother, a medal-winning Irish dancer 'at home' (i.e. in Ireland), danced reels and jigs in the Irish clubs. Shamrock and harp pins, worn on Saint Patrick's day, arrived every year from Ireland. My father sang rebel songs after a pint or two and frequently told how he had his teeth knocked out by the Black and Tans for doing no more than walking his own city streets.

For the British-Irish, however, this Irish sub-culture has to be accommodated within the context of the wider British culture into which they were born. It seems that 'while acknowledging an Irish dimension to their identity, many of the British-born lack the sense of place that marks the Irish-born'. Although finding that 'second and third generation Irish generally lay emphasis on not being foreign in Britain' and that a high number were not inclined to harbour anti-British feeling, the University of Bradford survey none the less noted that there was 'more than a share of hesitation in these answers'. The report concluded:

'Though committed members of a diaspora need to keep in touch with their original homeland in a real or idealised version, they cannot ignore the history, culture and tasks of the territorial community where they live...They must of their nature face up to being a hybrid - with the consequent dangers of breakdown. If a diaspora identity persists, it must also change in measure within its own rhythms and the rhythms of the majority community and in relation to its community or origin and the changes that take place there.'

The experience of psychologically juggling with three identities (British, British-Irish, and Irish) fused, with all the inherent ambivalences, into one personality, will vary between

individuals and generations. In the Bradford University survey, 50% of respondents with Irish parentage or grandparentage said they had some 'Irish dimension' to their identity. Of these, 21% thought the dimension was 'moderate', 15% thought it was 'small', and 14% thought it was 'large'. Of those saying they had a 'large' Irish dimension, 51% said they felt equally close to the Irish and the English peoples, 32% said they felt closer to the Irish, and 14% closer to the English.

Genetically transmitted factors which partly determine personal and social psychology is no doubt one explanation for this variation in perception among individuals from the same cultural group. However, 'identity' is not a fixed concept. It is a product of dynamic mental processes and will be adjusted to fit changing external and internal experiences. Education, meaning any experience which extends existing ways of thinking, is one environmental variable which has a major impact on an individual's concept of himself or herself.

For twenty years I travelled, lived, and worked in countries with diverse cultures and languages. In the process of

adapting to new ways of thinking and living, immediate contact with my British-Irish roots was lost. Although this was a period of personal development, it was also one of increasing psychological rootlessness, and at fanciful moments I wonder if this experience is just one expression of a culturally transmitted diaspora mentality.

By the time I returned to formal study in the United Kingdom at 38 years of age, there was an international dimension to my identity. The British dimension, the nature of which had been clear in my mind when I started travelling at 18 years of age, needed re-definition. So too, did my Irish identity: an apparently irrational urge to give substance to it had resulted in my obtaining an Irish passport while in Australia.

This re-thinking of identity may have resulted from the need for reference points to give meaning to, and to cope with, what were frequently dramatic and unique events experienced far from home. These reference points were the values instilled into me by, in particular, my parents, other members of the large nuclear family to which I belonged, and my Irish relatives, as well as the British-Irish community from which I came. No doubt parental familial values, which I increasingly grew to respect, became generalised, to the point of idealisation, as Irish attributes. But I suspect that pride in a general high regard for what are seen as Irish traits, even among people in the most unlikely places, was also a factor, as was a personal need to assert an identity which is individualistic and free-spirited.

After taking a degree in Bath College of Higher Education, which at the time did not offer Irish Studies as a subject, I completed a PhD in Irish history at Birkbeck College. The choice of topic was driven partly by an urge to explore my roots and enter the world of my forebears; partly by a need to give focus to those points of reference used to interpret and make sense of the world I had personally encountered; and partly to try and construct a philosophy on life which will inform my ideas of justice and morality, and my religious, social, economic and political views. For me, therefore, the study of Irish history is a personal exploration not only of my British-Irish identity but also of my universal human one.

Tom Dooley

Word Designs

Desktop Publishing and Computer Services

Today we all need to be
"well presented" especially
the written word.

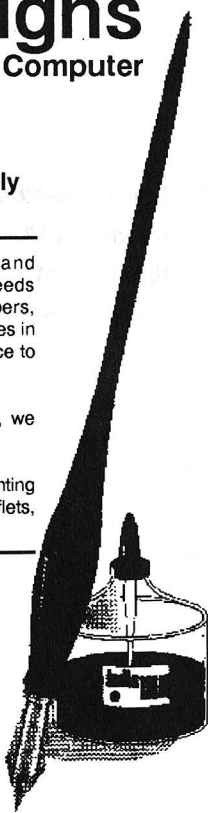
We offer a professional typing and presentation service for all your needs including: theses, dissertations, papers, reports and journals. We pride ourselves in offering a cost effective, efficient service to ensure that you get noticed.

Even if you only need a letter typed, we would be pleased to help.

We can also help with the design and printing of promotional materials, brochures, leaflets, booklets, invitations etc.

Contact: Sandy Trott
Tel (01245) 323260

20 Keats Square,
South Woodham Ferrers,
Essex CM3 5XZ



An Tréigint Agus An tAitheantas

Is ábhar an-tábhachtach ceist an aitheantais (identity) i measc lucht léinn faoi láthair. Sampla amháin den díospóireacht seo is ea an lipéad 'Éireannach'. O tháinig ann don sos comhraic i dTuaisceart na hÉireann breis is bliain ó shin tá tábhacht bhreise á samhlú leis an rud nó leis na rudaí is Éireannach ann, is é sin, na tuiscintí éagsúla ar an rud is Éireannach ann atá tagtha chin cinn sna sé chontae agus sa phoblacht. I Sasana nuair a bhíonn an t-aitheantas Éireannach á phlé is gnáthaí gurb é aitheantas an duine go bhfuil cúl tugtha aige do Éirinn a bhíonn i gceist. Tá dlúthbhaint ag aitheantas an duine seo leis an gcaidreamh atá aige ar an tír atá tréigthe aige, agus is é an caidreamh sin an taobh den ábhar seo is mó is suim liom san alt seo.

Tá caidreamh an duine ar an áit darb as é an-chasta ó thús. Nuair a imíonn duine as a áit dúchais éiríonn an caidreamh sin níos casta fós. Tá sampla an-mhaith den chaidreamh seo le fáil i saothar an fhile Máirtín Ó Direáin. D'fhág an Direánach a oileán dúchais féin, (Inis Mór-Árainn), sa bhliain 1928 nuair a fuair sé post in oifig an phoist sa Ghaillimh agus é ocht mbliana déag d'aois. I 1937 thug sé aghaidh ar Bhaile Átha Cliath nuair a fuair sé ardú poist. Cé go raibh sé fós in Éirinn is féidir a rá gur bhain mórán de na fadhbanna céanna leis an aistriú baile seo agus a bhaineann le haistriú tíre. Bíodh nárbh é a fhéinaitheantas mar Éireannach is mó a bhí á cheistiú aige sa luathfhilíocht, cé go bhféadfaí a rá gur cineál imirce a bhí i gceist ón Ghaeltacht go dtí an Ghalltacht, is léir go bhfuil áit an-mhór ag ceistiú aitheantais ina shaothar. Is é sin, bíonn mionscrúdú á dhéanamh aige ar a fhéinaitheantas mar dhuine go bhfuil cúl tugtha aige lena bhaile féin, leis an mbuaile bheag sin a bhí aige i dtús a shaoil.¹

Cuireann Máirtín Ó Direáin Árainn i láthair san fhilíocht. Cruthaíonn sé Árainn go fileata in easnamh na háite fisicúla féin. Le linn dó a bheith ag cumadh na háite seo ar leibhéal na filíochta tagann sé ar thuiscint air féin mar fhile. Trí mheán na filíochta tagann sé ar a ghuth indibhidiúil féin. Ach tuigeann sé, leis, in ndiaidh tamaill nach ionann Árainn na filíochta agus Árainn Cho. na Gaillimhe. Is Árainn liteartha an Árainn a chruthaíonn Máirtín Ó Direáin nach bhfuil le fáil ar aon léarscáil. Caithfear cuimhneamh gur rud suibhachtúil eispéaras an áiteachais. Ní hionann coincheap duine amháin d'áit ar bith agus coincheap duine eile den áit fhisiciúil chéanna. Is rud inathraithe an coincheap seo go

dtagann claochló air len imeacht ama - rud a aithníonn an Direánach féin sa dán *Berkeley*:

Ach ó thosaigh na clocha glasa
Ag dul i gcruth bríonglóide i m'aigne
Níl a fhios agam a Easpaig chóir
Nach tú féin a chuaigh ar an domhain
Is nach iad na móir a d'fhan le cladach.²

Cuireann sé seo laghmhisneach ar an bhfile cé gur dóichí gurbh é an próiseas samhlaíochtúil seo a chuir ar a chumas bheith ina fhile in aon chor.

Is rud nádúrtha an deighilt seo idir an áit fhisiciúil agus an coincheap atá ag an duine de. Is léir nárbh ionann an tuairim a bheadh ag imirceoir den áit a d'fhág sé/sí ina d[h]iaidh agus an áit fhisiciúil féin agus nárbh ionann na tuairimí a bheadh ag imirceoirí éagsúla den áit chéanna ach an oiread. Fós má chuireann eispéaras an imirceora mar strainséir ina aoi ar ucht³ na tíre nua ar a c[h]umas machnamh coinsiasach a dhéanamh ar a f[h]éinaitheantas féin mar Éireannach agus mar dhuine b'fhéidir gur cuma más neamhchruinn féin a t[h]uairim den tír a d'fhág sé nó sí ina d[h]iaidh.

Isobel Ní Ríain

Nótaí

- ¹ *Dánta 1939-1979, 1980, An Clóchomhar Tta., Baile Átha Cliath, lch.57.*
- ² *Ibid lch. 121.*
- ³ *Ibid lch. 160, Ar Afócht Dom.*

Queen's Colleges: BAIS Sesquicentenary Lectures

Following the success of the lectures mounted three years ago to celebrate the 400th anniversary of Trinity College, Dublin BAIS arranged a similar series to celebrate 150 years of university life in Cork, Belfast and Galway. This took place at the British Academy in September and October 1995 and formed an integral part of a year long programme of celebrations in London. As a result the organisers had the help not only of the alumni associations of the three institutions concerned but also of TCD and UCD graduates anxious to demonstrate the growing solidarity of the Irish academic world. In addition BAIS had once more the generous support of Allied Irish Banks who had also backed the Trinity series.

The first speaker was Professor John A. Murphy of University College, Cork who gave us the benefit of his recent research into the history of the college. At this lecture the chair was taken by Mary Keen of the British-Irish Association whose presence emphasised the relationship of the series to the current transformation and reassessment of the links between Britain and Ireland.

It was never intended, however, that speakers should concern themselves entirely with the detailed history of the three institutions and the second lecture by Dr. Art Cosgrove, a graduate of Queen's University, Belfast but now President of University College, Dublin, ranged over the present and future of the whole Irish university world on both sides of the Border. Appropriately the chair on this occasion was taken by Sir David Orr, the present Chancellor of Queen's but himself a Trinity College graduate. Present also was the new Irish ambassador in London fulfilling one of his first engagements.

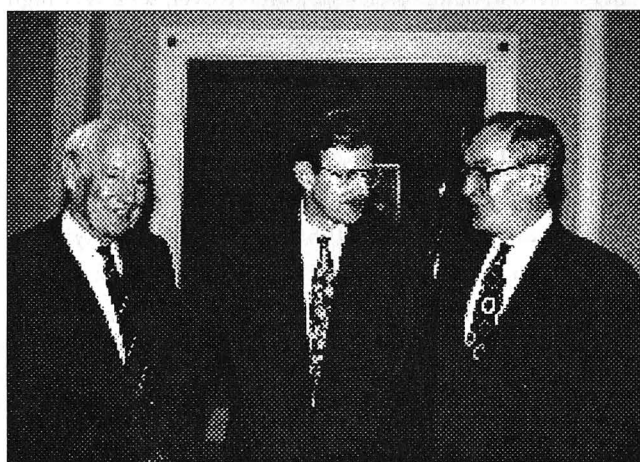
The third lecture attracted the largest audience for it dealt directly with a matter at the heart of the current peace process - religious identity in Northern Ireland. It gained especial immediacy from the fact that it was given by Professor Marianne Elliott who had been a member of the Opsahl Commission while in the chair was Professor Roy Foster, himself much concerned in his recent writings with questions of religious and national identity.

The final lecture, by Dr Gearoid O Tuathaigh of University

College, Galway, tackled the tricky question of how Irish anniversaries are observed. He reminded us that the centenary of his own college, given the circumstances of 1945, had been largely ignored and invited his audience to speculate on how the bicentenary of 1798 was likely to be celebrated. Turning to this year's 150th anniversary of the Famine, he challenged the whole current notion that Irish historians can be glibly divided into 'revisionists' and 'anti-revisionists'. Instead he simply saw a wider spectrum of opinion arising from the application of conscientious scholarship. Robert Kee, a BAIS patron, took the chair at this last lecture.

The series once again demonstrated how the Association can be the means of bringing together not just students and teachers but also the many others who, though not formally scholars, see Irish Studies as nevertheless very relevant to their own personal interests. The wide range of ages and professions represented in the audiences served to remind us that BAIS is not always speaking to a closed academic world. The fruits of Ireland-related scholarship can also provide a welcome intellectual stimulus and an enrichment of existence for all those who have tasted life in both these islands and there is obviously a future for a continuing series of high-level BAIS lectures aiming to provide what this wider audience requires.

Bob Bell



Left to Right Sir David Orr, Ambassador Ted Barrington, Dr Art Cosgrove

Photo Malcolm McNally - The Irish Post

Representing, Re-presenting Ireland

BAIS 5th Biennial Conference Sunderland University 8th -10th September 1995

From the start there was a marvellous atmosphere of relaxed welcoming and friendliness at the conference. It was Professor Tony Hepburn who suggested the venue and he deserves much of the credit for the success of the conference, as do all the people who he mobilised to help in various ways. The University's 'Wearmouth Hall' provided a perfect setting for an enjoyable and inspiring conference.



The Friday evening programme was entitled 'Sunderland's Irish Neighbours', to give the seventy or so delegates a sense of the area that they had come to and the extent of the North East's Irish connections. Collectively, the papers raised issues that recurred in other sessions and, more over, set a very high academic standard that was maintained over the weekend.

Frank Neal (Salford University) opened with a vividly graphic and statistical account of the post-Famine communities in Northumberland and Durham. Equalling riveting was **Don MacRaild** (Sunderland University) with his paper on the Orange Order in late-Victorian Lancashire and Cumberland. The evening's academic programme was rounded off with a fascinating slide-illustrated account of the Tyneside Irish Brigade in W.W.I, enthusiastically delivered by local specialist, **John Sheen**.

After a magnificent supper in Wearmouth Hall's restaurant, **Gerry Smyth** (John Moore's Liverpool University) described

and demonstrated four different Irish guitar playing styles, an instrument that is a comparatively recent addition to Irish music. Even the non-musicians were engrossed by his talk. The rest of the evening was given over to a ceilidh led by **Tony Corcoran** of the Tyneside Irish Festival. The highlight of the evening was a stunning display by two step-dancers in their brilliantly-coloured Celtic costumes. Following this, some of the delegates were persuaded to join a set dance and others contributed songs.

BAIS conferences always provide an opportunity for scholars from a range of disciplines, as well as non-specialists, to meet and exchange knowledge and enthusiasms. To cater for the variety of interests, Saturday morning's programme included concurrent sessions on literature, history and social sciences. Hubert Butler and the significance of his writings today was the subject of the first literature paper, given jointly by **Kate Bateman** and **Eleanor Burgess**, who between them have close academic and familial interests in Butler and his work. **Tim Middleton** (University College of Ripon and York) spoke on Patrick McCabe's *The Butcher Boy* and Roddy Doyle's *Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha* to examine contemporary fictions of the Irish masculinity, while **Gerry Smyth's** paper 'In Name Only: Joyce in the Institution' used the example of the writer to criticise modern Thatcherite teaching methods in higher education.

In the history strand, **Margaret Ward** (Bath College of Higher Education) convincingly hoisted the feminist flag in her paper, 'Different Documents - Different Story?' How different would key historical events look if seen through the eyes of women? In a closely argued paper, she took as examples the reorganisation of Sinn Féin in 1917 and the 1918 parliamentary election. **Tom Dooley** (Ealing Tertiary College) considered Irish recruitment into the British Army during W.W.I. His research was based on Waterford City and his paper was laced with statistics and illustrations taken from his recently published book on the topic.

In the Social Sciences, **Paddy Hillyard** (Bristol University) analysed what writers from the three disciplines of sociology, social policy and criminology have said - and not said (hence the title 'Silence of the Lambs') - about the north of Ireland. He examined the production of these kinds of knowledge in

Britain, the relationship between Ireland and Britain, and asked if the silences are a form of censorship. **Marcus Free** (Wolverhampton University) combined ethnographic research and popular cultural theory in his paper on the significance of World Cup football to the cultural identity of the Irish in a Birmingham pub. **Uli Kockel** (University of Liverpool) spoke to the topic of Ulster Protestant Identities. Mervyn Busteed chaired the afternoon session on the Peace Process. **Paul Stewart** (University of Wales, Cardiff) and **Jim McAuley** (Huddersfield University) gave a joint paper outlining Loyalist perspectives, while **Mark McGovern** (Edgehill University College, Ormskirk) drew our attention to the sea change in the nature of Irish nationalism, in particular of Republican strategic and ideological thinking. Finally **Peter Shirlow** (Queen's University, Belfast) very skilfully condensed and clarified the political economy of the Peace Process.

Following the tea break, **Mary Thompson** (St Patrick's College, Drumcondra) gave a detailed account of how Austin Clarke in the late 1940s set new standards for verse speaking and promoted verse drama, especially on radio. A presentation of a Clarke radio play ('Where the Crow Flies'), given by the Newcastle Upon Tyne Players under the direction of **Hugh Keegan**, crowned this intriguing session.

The Irish Embassy very generously provided a pre-dinner reception, hosted by **Geoffrey Keating**, the new cultural attaché, who had driven up from London earlier in the day. The evening meal was announced loudly and in style by the pipes of **John Burnett** (Sunderland University). **Professor Emrys Evans** (University of Wales) gave a typically ebullient and brilliant after dinner speech. Irish music played by local musicians, **Peter Kirkby** (Fiddle) and **Liam Webster** (Concertina), took the evening through to a close some time after midnight with a last blow on the bagpipes.

Sunday was devoted appropriately to the 150th Anniversary of the first reports of the potato blight in Ireland. **Christine Kinealy** (Liverpool University) very

capably opened the session with a post-revisionist interpretation of the disaster. **David Fitzpatrick** (Trinity College, Dublin), by quoting from contemporary letters to relatives in Australia, brought home to us the realities of the situation in respect of specific individuals. **Oonagh Walsh** (Aberdeen University) vividly described how the famine affected the Connaught District Lunatic Asylum, its inmates and their numbers. **Glenn Hooper** (St Mary's College, Belfast) moved on to the post-famine years to examine the writings of travellers, particular of those who saw the depopulated state of the country as a good opportunity for investment and re-settlement and promoted it accordingly. **Patrick O'Sullivan** (Series Editor of *The Irish World Wide*) brought the session to a close by discussing the place of the Irish famine within modern famine theory.

As the conference convenor for BAIS, I would like to thank all those who gave papers, to those who came and to everyone who had any part in making it such an enjoyable and informative conference. As we bade each other farewell we felt that glow of satisfaction of having experienced a memorable 48 hours: making new friends, enjoying the company of old ones, broadening our horizons and learning new approaches to familiar topics.

Eleanor Burgen



Irish Language & Cultural Conference

For the third successive year an Irish Language & Culture Conference was held at the Lady Godiva Hotel, Coventry on October 14/15th, where a group of about 80 from London, Leicester, Glasgow, Yorkshire, Liverpool, Wiltshire and Manchester enjoyed a weekend of talks, music, song and craic.

Saturday morning consisted of Irish Language workshops catering for three levels of competence. Mici Mac Cú Uladh from Tyrone/Northampton led the Beginners' group introducing basic conversation and explaining the origin of names and places. Noirín Ní Nuadhain from Mary Immaculate College, Limerick was in charge of the Intermediate group. With her usual expertise and enthusiasm she demonstrated new and exciting approaches to learning the language. The fluent speakers discussed topics of interest with Bernardine Nic Ghiolfa Phádraig of Oideas Gael/Dublin. Guest speaker in the afternoon was Declan Kiberd - well known writer and lecturer at University College, Dublin. As an accomplished exponent of Flann O'Brien's works he gave an insight into his writings with particular reference to "An Beál Bocht". Quoting Joyce and O'Casey among others he managed to convey the depth and skill of his parody and its influence on Irish Literature at the time. His illuminating talk provoked much discussion among the audience.

Lillis O Laoire from Limerick University - winner of several prizes in the sean-nós style of singing - explained the history of this art with examples of its origins and progress. He was ably accompanied by singers present.

On Sunday we heard the poetry of a young Connemara poet Seosamh O Guairim and Máire Uí Dhufaigh from Inis Oírr talked eloquently about the literature of the Aran islands, particularly its most famous poet - Máirtín Ó Direáin. The weekend closed with an informal lecture by the newly elected President of the Gaelic League - Gearóid O Gairealláin from Belfast. He spoke about the state of Irish in Britain and Ireland at present, about its revival with the founding of the Gaelic League and its progress since. There are now one million Irish speakers in Ireland with new Gaeiscoilanna opening each year and support from the state increasing daily. There is still a great need for funding to address the problem of suitable resources and teachers being made available. His talk was enjoyed by the attendants who contributed their own ideas of how best to promote the language.



Left to Right Gearóid O Gairealláin, Cait Thompson, Declan Kiberd

On Saturday evening Máire Ní Chuinn read her poetry while the more energetic danced to the music of "Clann na hEireann" - the Birmingham branch of Cornhaltas. A "late session in the bar" consisted of a mixture of old and new music which lasted into the early hours! In all, a good time was had by all, whether singing, playing an instrument, speaking their native language or merely listening.

Go mbeirimid beo ar an arn seo arís!

Cait Thompson

Cambridge University History Faculty in association with *History Ireland* One Day Symposium at Queen's College Cambridge Sunday 31st March 1996

THE IRISH FAMINE AND MIGRATION

The symposium forms part of a series of world-wide events to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Great Irish Famine. Everybody with an interest in the subject will be welcome, and there will be opportunity for discussion after each speaker's paper.

MORNING SESSION 10.00 AM - 12.45 PM

Dr Brendan Bradshaw, Queen's College, Cambridge,
Introduction

Prof Jim Donnelly, University of Wisconsin,
*Constructing the memory of the Great Famine in Ireland
and the Diaspora c 1850 - 1900*

Dr John Belchem, University of Liverpool,
Politics, the Famine and the Diaspora

AFTERNOON SESSION 2.00 PM - 6.30 PM

Prof Robert Scally, New York University,
The experience of Famine emigration

Dr Frank Neal, University of Salford,
The Famine Irish in Britain

Dr Peter Gray, Downing College, Cambridge,
"Shovelling our paupers"? the State and Famine emigration

Conference fee (including morning coffee and afternoon tea) £5.00 (full) £2.50 (students and unwaged)
Please send cheques payable to "Cambridge Group for Irish Studies" to Dr Peter Gray, Downing College, Cambridge CB2 1DQ

A cafeteria lunch will be available for purchase at Queen's College.

Fin de Siècle Conference at Bath



The conference, which took place on 1st July 1995, was a great success, and attracted over 80 delegates from approximately 45 institutions in the UK, Ireland and Europe. The conference was inter-disciplinary, and there were some lively discussions across disciplinary boundaries and from different perspectives. There were two keynote addresses, by Dr Peter Nicholls of the University of Sussex, and Professor Denis Judd of the University of North London, and 40 workshop papers, given in parallel sessions. Questions of nation, of national boundaries, and of imperialism were considered by a number of delegates during the conference. The Irish dimension was represented in particular by a workshop session on Oscar Wilde, 'Wilde in the 1890s', chaired by Neil Sammells of BCHE. This well-attended session comprised of

two papers: 'Oscar Wilde and the "Daughters of Decadence"' by Sally Ledger of the University of the West of England, Bristol, and 'Your place or mine? Oscar Wilde at century's end' by David Rose, Director of the Oscar Wilde Summer School, Bray. (The third contributor to this session, Marie Mulvey Roberts of the University of the West of England, was unfortunately unable to attend, due to illness.) Sally Ledger used Wilde's trials as an exemplary moment in the late-Victorian reaction to decadence, and drew some contrasts between feminist and Wildean decadence. David Rose explored the Edwardian responses to Wilde and sought to draw some wider implications of Wilde's work, apart from the immediate context of the fin de siècle. Wilde was also discussed in a variety of other contexts, including his status as a Victorian or Edwardian writer, his work as an editor of a woman's publication, and, crucially, his nationality: for example, the question was raised, from the floor, of whether Wilde was prosecuted for his sexuality or for his Irishness.

Wilde was also a topic for discussion in the session on Gender and Decadence: by Deborah Tyler-Bennett of Sheffield Hallam University as a counterpoint to some female poets of the 1890s and as a point of comparison between masculine and feminine versions of decadence, and by Sue Zlosnik of Liverpool Institute of Higher Education as a critic of the work of George Meredith, and as a writer who demonstrated the problematic masculinity of narrative form. Ana Parejo Vadillo of the Universidad Complutense, Madrid, in a session entitled 'Borderlines', incorporated some comments about *Salome* into her analysis of gender transgression and transvestitism in late-19th century literature. Finally, in a concluding session on 'Empire', Colin Graham's paper on *Castle Rackrent* looked at the colonial relationship between England and Ireland at the close of the 18th century, and argued that both Britishness and Irishness are problematised by this moment of transition, and that what results is a hybrid national formation resistant to closure.

In conclusion, although Irishness was not a major theme of the conference at the outset, it had emerged by the end of the day as one of the most interesting examples of the fin de siècle and all it entails. The book of essays which is going to be published on the basis of the conference will demonstrate this, as nationality and imperialism has been chosen as one of its discrete sections.

Dr Tracey Hill

ACIS/CAIS in Belfast

The American Conference for Irish Studies and the Canadian Association for Irish Studies Annual Meetings, Queen's University of Belfast, 25 June - 1 July 1995.

For the second time this decade ACIS and CAIS held joint annual meetings at an Irish venue. (The first was in Galway in 1992). Well over five hundred individuals registered as the conference drew participants from across North America, Europe, and Asia. Dr. Brian Walker and Dr. Sophie King of the Institute for Irish Studies at Queen's served as local organizers, and their efforts insured that the week-long meeting provided a wonderful balance of opportunities for scholarly exchanges, informal discussions, and convivial socializing.

As in any conference, featured speakers and presentations did a much to set the tone, and those engaged by Walker and King set a marvelous tone for the entire conference. Seamus Heaney's opening address "More Language" powerfully reminded his listeners that his skills as a critic, especially in his ability to put a human face on hermeneutics, wonderfully complement his achievements as a poet. He underscored this impression for conference participants later in the same day when he, Michael Longley, and David Hammond recreated their tours of Ireland a quarter century ago with an evening of songs and poetry. Jonathan Bardon, Marianne Elliott, Donald Rickard and Jane Urquhart offered equally moving talks over the course of the week. The only disappointment among the plenary speakers was Conor Cruise O'Brien who seemed to be under the impression that he had been asked to review the Nick Nolte movie "Jefferson in Paris." The presentation did offer his listeners a hint of his interests outside Irish studies.

Over 235 conferees participated in paper sessions, panels, film screenings, and musical performances that ranged over Irish history, literature, sociology, anthropology, economics, and popular culture. The sheer number of presenters made multiple sessions unavoidable, and as a result even the most diligent participant could hardly take in more than a quarter of the conference. Receptions, coffee breaks, and pub

gatherings, however, gave one ample opportunity to catch up on the highlights of the day.

What distinguished this gathering from other ACIS and CAIS meetings of recent memory were the monumental efforts by Walker and King to arrange a series of events that gave participants a very vivid sense of life in the North. These included visits to the Down County Museum, a tour of the City of Belfast, a visit to Armagh and the Navan Fort, a tour of Derry City with a side trip to Donegal, and a tour of the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum. There were also receptions at Queen's, the Ulster Museum, the Linen Hall Library, the Arts Council Headquarters, the Public Records Office, Hillsborough Castle, and the Belfast City Hall. In addition a number of Belfast theater companies offered performances at the Lyric Theatre, and Medbh McGuckain and Jennifer Johnston read from their works.

Michael Patrick Gillespie

Green Ink Writers
present
GREEN TONGUES
A Collection of Short Stories & Poetry

ISBN 0-950-8469-4-5

Price £3.00 pb

Green Ink Book Shop
8 Archway Mall London N19 5RG

Making Connections: Ireland, Britain and the Search for a Lasting Peace

Making Connections was a two day educational event held in Sheffield in February of this year. The report of the event makes for interesting reading due to the diversity of subject matter and some interesting participants. This was not simply a political conference involving academics and political activists but was, instead, a series of workshops and discussions involving grass roots organisations such as the Rathcoole Self Help Group and Glor na nGael (Irish language group) from Ireland, as well as the Newham Monitoring Project and the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom from Britain, to name but a few. There is little in the way of in depth analysis in the report but this is countered by the fact that there is an extensive diversity represented in terms of participants backgrounds i.e. black British, Catholic Irish, Protestant women etc. Subjects covered include the Prevention of Terrorism Act, the campaign to open border roads, discrimination, civil liberties, the 'colonial legacy' and Britain's role as well as the questions of language, culture and identity. One Loyalist former prisoner is quoted thus: 'Unionists have been forced to exaggerate their Britishness... As a child I celebrated St. Patrick's day but not any more - the nationalists have been forced to exaggerate their Irishness. I remember Irish dancing classes in the Shankill...' The fact that this event involved Loyalists and Nationalists debating these issues together is surely thanks to the more inclusive atmosphere created by the ceasefires. Liz Curtis (the English writer) delivered a speech in which she pointed to the significance of the introduction of Irish language classes at the Shankill Womens Centre, linking this development with the historic role of Protestant Gaelic revivalists such as Alice Milligan and Douglas Hyde. She went on to list the many occasions in English history when support had been shown for the Irish struggle i.e. the Chartists, Karl Marx's daughters etc. The most valuable contributions to the event came from Irish Times journalist, Harry Brown and Heather Floyd of the Shankill Womens Centre. From their differing traditions they both list a range of positive political developments since the ceasefires. Heather Floyd argues that the British are looking for a way to 'let go' of Ireland, but unlike the

established Unionist politicians, she does not see this as something to fear: if Protestants look to themselves and develop a socialist / unionism then the future is not so bleak: 'I think that ten to fifteen years down the line with Europe, cross-border bodies and a Northern assembly, a possible single currency, old divisions could lose the significance they have today'. Harry Brown unintentionally seems to have complimented this view by making the observation that, following the Irish public's outcry over the Birmingham Six and Guildford Four cases, there is evidently Southern concern over the plight of Northern nationalists and consequently the Dublin politicians have to become more involved in the Northern Irish question whilst Westminster is looking for a way to become less involved. All in all, an interesting report. In the aftermath of the ceasefires, hopefully this more favourable atmosphere will lead to many more similar events.

Martin O'Donnell

A One Day Conference

'TO THE OTHER SHORE...'

English views of Ireland and the Irish

22 June 1996

Keynote speaker: **Andrew Hadfield**
(University of Wales Aberystwyth),
Co-editor of *Strangers to that Land*

Proposal for papers of not more than 20 minutes in length on English perceptions of Ireland and the Irish are invited from scholars in any discipline to arrive by 15 January 1996

Conference fee (including coffee and lunch) £20 (free for those presenting papers)

Further details from:
Ms Carol Churchouse, English Department,
LSU College of HE,
The Avenue,
Southampton SO17 1BG
Tel: 01703-228761
Fax: 01703-230944
e-mail: berhardt@tcp.co.uk



Master of Arts in British and Irish Art: 1700 to the present day

The Department of Art History, University of Nottingham is offering a new one-year or a two-year part-time modular course leading to the degree of Master of Arts. This course is the only taught History of Art MA in the United Kingdom that privileges an Irish content. The course will demand completion of four taught modules and a 15,000 word dissertation.

This MA course is wide-ranging both chronologically and in the variety of approaches which it offers and encourages. Teaching will be in small seminar groups, where students will be encouraged to explore a range of methodologies. Candidates from overseas are encouraged to apply.

Especial attention will be paid to issues relating to centres and peripheries. Part of the course will attempt to broaden the often centrist, London-based approach of British art history; a pro-regionalist approach being thus encouraged. This course is also the only taught MA in the United Kingdom that fully integrates a study of British and Irish art of the modern period.

LANDSCAPE PAINTING AND THE IDEA OF A BRITISH TRADITION

The way in which portraiture reflects and helps to create the self-image of a society. Modules will include:

BRITISH AND IRISH ART HISTORY: METHODOLOGIES AND ISSUES SINCE 1970

(Tutor: Fintan Cullen)

LANDSCAPE IN BRITAIN SINCE 1800

(Tutor: Nicholas Alfrey)

CENTRE AND PERIPHERY IN THE ART OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND:

c. 1750 TO THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

(Tutor: Fintan Cullen)

BRITISH PORTRAIT PAINTING, 1700-1815

(Tutor: Desmond Shawe-Taylor)

Candidates are welcome to opt for modules in other departments to fulfil their quota.

DJANOGLY ART GALLERY

The Department of Art History at the University of Nottingham benefits from being housed in a new Arts Centre which it shares with the Djanogly Art Gallery (formerly the Nottingham University Art Gallery) and the University's Department of Music. There is also a bookshop and a cafe. Over the past few years the Gallery has hosted important exhibitions of British content, both historical and contemporary. Recent shows have included *Toil and Plenty*, *Images of the Agricultural Landscape in England, 1780-1850*; *Heaven and Earth. The Religion of Beauty in Late Victorian Art and Maurice Cockrill. Paintings and Drawings 1974-1994*. In the next few years a number of important exhibitions are planned which will discuss the representation of Ireland in both the historical and contemporary context. MA students will, when the occasion arises, utilise exhibitions as part of their taught modules.

For further information please contact:

Dr Fintan Cullen,

Department of Art History, University of Nottingham,
The Arts Centre, University Park, Nottingham NG7 2RD
Tel. 0115 951 3137 or 0115 951 3185 (answer phone service)

Fax. 0115 951 3194

Email Fintan.Cullen@nottingham.ac.uk



Cascando: culture, creativity, criticism

C*ascando*, 'the national student literary magazine', is a well-produced publication. A special 'Double Issue' on Irish writing is a welcome and astute choice of focus by its editors. BAIS members who are interested in contemporary Irish cultural politics, literary debate and creative writing should get hold of a copy (it is due for publication early in 1996). Although I only read early drafts and did not get to see all the items lined up for the final publication, I can report that there is enough decent material to recommend the magazine. *Cascando* has pulled together a range of reviews, articles, interviews and samples of new student writing, mixing the well-established with those seeking a wider audience and constructive criticism.

Conor Carville's interview with Bill McCormack threw up some thought-provoking ideas about writing and culture in Ireland, particularly the post-Ceasefire context of the North. The erudite McCormack outlined different phases in the way creative writers have dealt with the Troubles, he questions the idea of Tom Paulin's 'Dialect Dictionary' project and he cites Mebh McGuckian as his own 'desert island' writer. Interviews with Eilean Ní Chuilleanain and Colm Tóibín provided insights into the work of these writers but I found Catherine Pound's interview with Dermot Bolger less satisfactory. Maybe it was because the interview seemed too short or perhaps it was because Bolger comes out with some annoying comments. He seems to wear a working class chip on his shoulder and becomes uncomfortable when discussing

his own writing. The interview I would have liked to read was that given by Tom Paulin, particularly to see if he is asked to talk about the project that McCormack had criticised.

There are also review articles on John Banville's *Athena*, the poetry of Martin Mooney and Justin Quinn (*Grub* and *O'o'a'a'* *Bird* being their debut collections) and Briege Duffaud's first novel, *A Wreath Upon the Dead*. Articles on Ciaran Carson, Paul Muldoon, Medbh McGuckian are promised for the full issue. Prose writing is featured in Lawrence McKeown's *Jailtacht/Gaeltacht*, a fascinating and at times humorous reflection of his time inside H-Blocks as a Republican prisoner, the process by which he came to learn Irish and the defiance that this signified in the circumstances: 'I had learnt how ingenious, how innovative, imaginative and resilient we could be'. Last but not least, *Cascando* presents new poetry by Barbara Beck, Gerry Callaghan, Patrick Cullinan, Julie Rowell, David Wheatley and Howard Wright, of which Beck's Galway-set poems catch the eye and David Wheatley's precision impresses.

Cascando Issue 5/6: available by post from *Cascando Press*
Ltd PO Box 1499 London SW10 9TZ

Lance Pettitt

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK *Elizabeth Bowen: an Irish Perspective*

8th - 10th March 1996

Main Speakers will include:
Dr Patricia Coughlan, Dr Anne Fogarty,
Professor Roy Foster, Victoria Glenndinning,
Professor W J McCormack.

For further information contact:
Tina O'Toole, English Department, University College Cork, CORK, Ireland
Tel: 00-353-21-276871 Fax: 345122 e-mail: tee@ucc.ie

Poetic Land - Political Territory

In an edition which has John Ardagh criticising the Irish for a lack of a strong visual sense, we are pleased to include a review of a recent touring exhibition by Irish artists.

If the title of the show gives the suggestion of purple mountain ranges and the dunes of the Banna strand, the nearest one might come to it are Mick O'Kelly's bleak black and white photographs from his "Allegories of Geography" series. In "Property" (1987) and "Soil" (1987), he depicts an unwelcoming terrain from which the meagre living would be extracted with hard graft. The staccato titles guard the work from sentimentality.

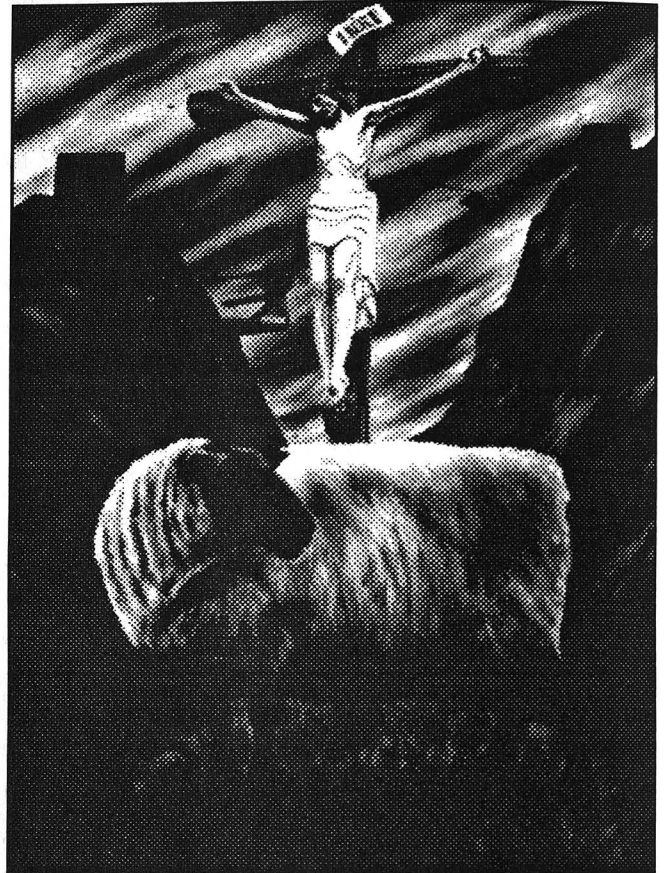
Gwen O'Dowd's large sea-scape canvases beckon the viewer with out-reaching arms of sea, but like the sirens, their grasp would be deadly. While Sean McSweeney's "Bogland Trees" (1988) draw one in with a mirage of firm land adrift in a sky reflecting on a morass of bog.

Several of the artists metaphorically make use of Ireland's boglands, most strikingly in Catherine Harper's sculptures made from bogland materials. Influenced by Seamus Heaney's poetry, Harper has reimagined "Tollund Man" and "Bog Queen" in all their leathery, fibrous, pagan glory. Upright and demanding, they point the finger at us from their millennia of experience.

Belfast's urban themes are taken up by Anthony Davies in his "Wasteland Series" (1985) of linocut prints. "Untitled V" has a dishevelled young man staring wildly into the future while dogs at his feet bare their teeth at us. In the background cranes and diggers demolish a housing estate long since abandoned to graffiti artists. The work is an indictment of Thatcher's eighties: cold, callous and capitalist.

Rita Duffy covers more overtly political ground with her satirical and grotesque oil paintings. "Mother Ulster" speaks for herself on the front cover of this issue of the *Newsletter*. Reminiscent of Paula Rego's disturbing child subjects, "Holy Ground" has a young girl (with ancient eyes) praying over the grave of a rat as its spirit ascends and four sinister looking men watch from a distance. In the background stands a

crooked house. The painting is chilling in its depiction of innocence lost to perversity.



Dermot Seymour's "The Queen's Own Scottish Borders..." (1988)
A deeply cynical view of the roles of the army and religion in Northern Ireland

It was the curator's hope that these works would be seen as art first and Irish second. It was impossible to divorce the two as their themes are so particularly Irish (and therefore universal). That the Irish art world is vibrant, diverse and undoubtably talented is made clear by this exhibition.

Madeleine Casey

GRANT AWARD

Mr M A Busted and Dr R I Hodgson, of the Department of Geography, University of Manchester, have received a grant of £450 from the Manchester Geographical Society for continuation of their work on the Irish migrant population of Manchester in the first half of the nineteenth century.

The Great Famine

Part 1: Blight (BBC2 Monday 4th September)

Part 2: Emigration (BBC2 Monday 11th September)

These two 50-minute programmes, narrated by Dubliner Ian Gibson, and made by John Percival (who produced the documentary series "Africa") were made by the BBC to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the outbreak of the Great Famine.

They were clearly made with a general audience in mind and as such they succeed admirably. Interest is immediately captured by linking recent newsreel images from Somalia with illustrations (mainly from the Illustrated London News) of the Great Famine. What could have been a mere journalistic juxtaposing of images is left hanging as such until the end of the second programme. Then the appropriate political analysis draws the conclusion that, in the words of Christine Kinealy, the most recent historian of the Famine (This Great Calamity), "it shouldn't have happened then, and it shouldn't be happening now".

The first programme marshalls together the opinions of such notables as Cormac O Grada, and Mary Daly as well as Christine Kinealy to trace the origins and development of the Famine. It offers an historical narrative concentrating largely on the paltry attempts at relief by successive Tory and Whig governments, mainly as a result of a strict ideological adherence to the doctrines of laissez-faire.

Although many of the Famine facts and figures may lose their shock value with each repetition - how in any case is it possible to mentally handle not one or ten or one thousand but millions of individual human tragedies? - nonetheless television has the power to still jolt us on occasion with a stark image. The fact that oral testimony about the 1840s is still alive in the mouths of some old people today shows how close rather than distant the Famine actually is. In programme one an old man recalls in his childhood his grandfather telling him that he as a child was buried alive and was rescued during the Famine. Such individual incidents dramatise the horror of the bare statistics, and indeed this is where the first programme most succeeds, in offering an informed introduction to the famine for the general viewer.

More than this however, the second programme whilst

nominally looking at the Irish diaspora resulting from the famine, in fact also offers some analysis of the longer term implications of the famine for Ireland itself e.g. lower rates of marriage, and later marriages; and the rise of the priest as a new moral guardian. These factors affecting personal aspects of life, when linked with broader economic changes in town and country, set the tone for the development of much of Irish society well into the 20th century.

In particular, changes in landholding patterns (often the working through of changes already apparent before the Famine) e.g. the extinction of the poorer peasant classes; the rise of the middle ranking farmer; the development of his equivalent in the small towns - the merchant/grocer/gombeen man - call him what you will - all these changes were of paramount importance. The alliance of middle ranking farmers and merchants, a new Catholic middle class, were to be the backbone of later reform movements, and of early forms of constitutional nationalism, as well as setting a conservative moral tone for generations to come.

However whilst attention is drawn to these factors in programme two, more might have been made of their longer term consequences, for they reach into today's modern Ireland - an Ireland which is still coming to terms with how to commemorate the Famine 150 years on. Some still don't wish to be reminded; others suggest that a new maturity of outlook enables the Famine to be viewed in a fresh light.

In this context whilst the programmes do consider the role for example of larger Irish merchants colluding with British policy in exporting grain at a time of mass starvation, perhaps more work is now needed on the role of the emerging smaller merchant in the towns. Any revelations such research would throw up of a darker and less than flattering side of Irish history during the Famine should not dent but rather enhance this new maturity and confidence.

In conclusion then, with minor reservations, two excellent programmes on the Famine. There is also a book available which the BBC produced to accompany the programmes.

John Woodhurst

Writing out of Ireland

'You realise in that moment that you really are an emigrant now. And that being an emigrant isn't just an address. You realise that it's actually a way of thinking about Ireland.'

(Joseph O'Connor)

On July 1st and 2nd last the Centre for Irish Studies at St Mary's University College, Strawberry Hill hosted a weekend conference to discuss the fiction and autobiography of Irish writers in Britain. The conference, which was supported by Aer Lingus, the British Council in Dublin, the Irish Embassy and *The Irish Post*, was the first of its kind to be held in Britain and brought together writers, readers and academics to discuss themes of identity, language, class and gender in the work of a range of writers. The conference focused attention upon a frequently neglected aspect of the Irish migrant experience, namely the creative response of Irish men and women to the freedoms and pressures of exile.

Jim O'Hara, Director of the Centre, welcomed an audience of 84 delegates on Saturday morning and pointed out the appropriateness of the venue for the conference. The College had a long history of Irish connections and the writer Sean O'Faolain had taught in St Mary's in the 1930s. Fintan O'Toole, award-winning *Irish Times* journalist, opened the proceedings with a keynote lecture entitled 'Home from Home: Emigration and Irish Writing' which brilliantly identified themes that would recur during the course of the weekend. This was followed by readings from three of Ireland's leading novelists: Ronan Bennett, Patrick McCabe and Glenn Patterson, with McCabe's performance being particularly well-received. The afternoon was devoted to seminars entitled 'England's Workers, Ireland's Writers', including papers on Bill Naughton, J.M. O'Neill and emigrant autobiography in the 1950s and 60s, and 'Exile and the Irish

Language', focusing on Padraic O Conaire and Donal MacAmlaigh. Later that evening, Paul Murray, representing the Irish Embassy, hosted a pre-dinner wine reception in the Long Gallery in Waldegrave House. He later introduced the highlight of the evening programme, readings by three distinctive and highly acclaimed writers: Maurice Leitch, Bernard MacLaverty and Moy McCrory. MacLaverty, reading his short story, 'Walking the Dog', gave a particularly arresting performance and produced a palpable atmosphere of tension and anticipation among the audience in the Waldegrave Drawing Room.

Sunday began with a seminar in the morning,

'Middle-Class Migrants', dealing with Kate O'Brien and William Trevor. The mid-morning readings slot showcased the vibrant and challenging fiction of three 'new wave' Irish writers, Emma Donoghue, Bridget O'Connor and Joseph O'Connor, all of whom are rapidly redefining what writing out of Ireland means today. The audience were

moved and amused by these readings. The afternoon seminar discussed the work of Moy McCrory, Bernard MacLaverty, Anne Devlin and Maurice Leitch under the title of 'Gendered Identities' and the conference ended with a plenary session. The discussion that this produced demonstrated a deeply reflective attitude to the experience of exile among the current generation of Irish emigrants in Britain and underlined the importance of creative writing as part of that process. A collection of essays under the title, *Migrant Fictions*, developing the central themes of the conference and based on some of the papers, is being prepared for publication.

Liam Harte and Lance Pettitt



Design by Colin Sutton

Seamus Heaney: Nobel Laureate

At a personal level, the award of the 1995 Nobel Prize for Literature to Seamus Heaney represents the ultimate accolade for a poet already richly laden with public honours. At a national level, it reinforces Ireland's dominant position in twentieth century literature, Heaney being the fourth Irish writer to receive the prize this century after Yeats, Shaw and Beckett. Of course, Heaney has been deservedly acclaimed as the greatest Irish poet since Yeats for some time now, so in a sense this award merely confirms the prevailing critical consensus. What is less widely recognised is that he is one of the most insightful and imaginative literary critics of his generation. Books like *Preoccupations* (1980), *The Government of the Tongue* (1988) and *The Redress of Poetry* (1995) are full of illuminating and affirmative meditations on the transformative moral power of poetry through the ages. Hopefully, the laureateship will bring this aspect of his achievement to the attention of a wider audience.

As with any award, the public reception of the news is as interesting as the announcement itself. The notoriously fractious literary establishment has been remarkably unanimous in its response. Heaney's fellow writers in Ireland and Britain reacted to the news with genuine good will and generosity, acknowledging that the award was long overdue and couldn't have gone to a better poet or a nicer man. Some cynical voices were raised in the wider community, however, claiming that the Nobel committee were influenced more by political than aesthetic considerations in giving the prize to an Irish Catholic from Derry at the end of the first year of the Northern Ireland peace process. If Heaney wins this year, they wondered, can Adams, Reynolds and Spring be far behind?

But most fascinating of all was the way in which Heaney's honourance was reported in sections of the British media. Both BBC and ITV television news reports presented him as a popular, inoffensive, even-handed poet of sensuous rhymes and rustic themes who has remained scrupulously detached from the messy world of Irish politics. This reading of Heaney's work is as distorted and misleading as earlier characterisations of him (often by the same media) as an apologist for IRA violence. Indeed, it makes one suspect that his political sanitisation may have already begun and that in the future, perhaps in his own lifetime even, a bland

humanitarian gloss will have been applied to what is a poetry of deeply examined social and political responsibility. Take 'Punishment', for example, the poem in which Heaney courageously lays bare his ambivalent response to the IRA's tarring and feathering of disloyal Catholic girls in the 1970s. The closing lines succinctly register his conflicting feelings of humane sympathy and instinctive understanding:

*I who have stood dumb
when your betraying sisters,
cauled in tar,
wept by the railings.*

*who would connive
in civilised outrage
yet understand the exact
and tribal, intimate revenge.*

Many of his finest poems have their origins in his agonised self-examinations about the role and responsibility of the poet in a time of conflict, none more so than 'The Strand at Louisa Beg' and 'Station Island: VIII'. The former is a moving elegy for his murdered cousin, Colum McCartney, in which the poet pictures himself anointing the dead man's body with dewy moss and green rushes. The latter contains a self-condemnatory reconsideration of this passive response, as Heaney imagines his cousin's ghost returning to rebuke him for his moral evasiveness and lyric sweetness:

*The Protestant who shot me through the head I accuse
directly, but indirectly, you who now alone perhaps upon
this bed for the way you whitewashed ugliness and drew
the lovely blinds of the Purgatorio and saccharined my death
with morning dew'.*

The conflicting demands of art and nation continue to engage his imagination, though his recent work shows him moving beyond realism towards a poetry of quasi-religious vision. *Seeing Things* (1991) is animated by his need 'To credit marvels. Like the tree-clock of cans / The tinkers made. So long for the air to brighten, / Time to be dazzled and the heart to lighten'. Yet 'the music of what happens' still catches Heaney's ear. In a recent radio interview, he named Robert Frost's 'Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening' as his favourite poem. Let's hope that like Frost's distracted traveller, he too has miles to go before he sleeps.

Liam Harte

Treasurer's Report



The Association's financial position is stable, its bank accounts currently being around £18,000 in credit. In the short to medium term, it is therefore able to finance its activities. Costs are minimal. In terms of overheads and outgoings, BAIS is as 'lean' as it is possible to be and still remain functioning. However, given the limited amount of time which voluntary officers are able to make available, fund-raising efforts are also minimal, and more thought needs to be given to a fund-raising strategy.

The aim is to make every Association activity an income-generating one. It is not yet possible to say whether the recent conference and lecture series met this objective. Much will depend on the response of the Irish Cultural Relations Committee to our request for funding. The position should be clearer by the time the annual account is published in the

next *Newsletter*. Sponsorship by the AIB bank, to the tune of £1,300, made the lecture series possible, and for this the council members are very grateful. Cait Thompson continues to make a splendid job of managing the Irish Language Committee activities.

Difficulties of membership administration, which have been a continuing problem since the vacation of central offices and the redundancy of full-time staff, are now hopefully resolved. In close co-operation with the editors of *Irish Studies Review*, and particularly with Sarah Briggs, the editorial assistant, for whose goodwill we are grateful, new membership administration procedures have been put in place. A computerised membership database has been created using the relatively inexpensive services of a consultant friend of a council member. On receipt, the details of new members are entered on the database and a 'New Members Pack' consisting of the latest editions of the *Irish Studies Review* and the BAIS *Newsletter*, as well as a welcoming address from the Chairman, is sent to them from the *Irish Studies Review* Office in Bath. Reminders to renew their subscriptions will automatically be sent to members twelve months from the month of their registering as a new member. Late renewals will take effect from the month renewal was due.

The system first went into operation in July this year, and I am pleased to say that the number of lapsed members renewing their subscriptions was very encouraging. The number of fully paid-up members now stands at around 231 (November 1995).

Tom Dooley

South Atlantic Quarterly

Duke University Press, North Carolina

'Ireland and Irish Cultural Studies'

Vol 95 No.1 Special Issue editor John P. Waters

March 1996

Contributors include: Guinn Batten, Joe Cleary, Luke Dodd, Luke Gibbons, Dillon Johnston, David Kellogg, Declan Kiberd, Aine O'Brien, Lance Pettitt, Lawrence J. Taylor, Clair Wills

Orders to SAQ, Duke University Press, Box 90660 Durham NC 27708-0660 Price \$10 plus postage.

BAIS Council and Standing Committee Members

CHAIR

Mr Sean Hutton 69A Balfour Street London SE17 1PL

Tel: 0171-916-2733

ACTING SECRETARY

Mr Mervyn Busted Department of Geography, University of Manchester, M13 9PL

Tel: 0161-275-3623

TREASURER / MEMBERSHIP

Dr Tom Dooley 142 Rydal Crescent Perivale Middlesex UB6 8EQ

Tel: 0181-997-9224

IRISH LANGUAGE

Ms Caít Thompson 36 Evenlode Crescent Coundon Coventry CV6 1BP

Tel/Fax: 01203-591530

EDUCATION

Mr John Woodhurst Newark and Sherwood College Friary Road Newark Notts NG24 1PB Tel: 01636-680680

Dr Bob Bell Faculty of Education The Open University Milton Keynes MK7 6AA

Mr Mervyn Busted (as above)

Mr Nesson Danaher Soar Valley College Gleneagles Avenue Leicester LE4 7GY Tel: 0116-2669625

Dr Christine Kinealy, University of Liverpool

CONFERENCE AND CULTURAL

Ms Eleanor Burgess Mulberries Boreham Chelmsford Essex CM3 3DS Tel: 01245-467287

Mr Mervyn Busted (as above)

Dr Mary Hickman Irish Studies Centre University of North London

PUBLISHING

Dr Lance Pettitt (*Newsletter*) St Mary's University College Strawberry Hill Twickenham TW1 4SX

Tel: 0181-240 4090 (direct line) Fax: 0181-240 4255 e-mail: Lancep@smuc.demon.co.uk

Dr Neil Sammells (*Irish Studies Review*) Bath College of Higher Education Newton Park Bath BA2 9BN

Tel: 01225-873701 Fax: 01225-874082

OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS

Dr Graham Davis Bath College of Higher Education BA2 9BN

Dr Jim McAuley School of Human Sciences University of Huddersfield HD1 3DH

Mrs Val Smith 16 Glenpark Drive Churchtown Southport Merseyside PR9 9FA

Dr Paul Stewart Business School College of Cardiff University of Wales Cardiff

Contributors

Bob Bell is a Lecturer in the School of Education at The Open University and a member of the BAIS Education Committee.

Paul Bew is Professor of Political Science at The Queen's University of Belfast.

Eleanor Burgess is BAIS Conference Convenor and biographer of Hubert Butler.

Mervyn Busteed is a Senior Lecturer in Geography at Manchester University and Acting Secretary of BAIS.

Madeleine Casey is a postgraduate student and teaches an adult education course in Irish Drama at Hammersmith & Fulham Irish Centre.

Fintan Cullen lectures in the Department of Art History at the University of Nottingham.

Tom Dooley is a Senior Lecturer at Ealing Tertiary College and BAIS Treasurer. His book, *Irish men or English Soldiers* was recently published by Liverpool University Press.

Martin O'Donnell is currently an M.Phil student at St Mary's University College. His dissertation is entitled 'The contemporary British Left and its attitude to the Northern Ireland question.'

Michael Patrick Gillespie is Professor of English at Marquette University, Wisconsin, USA and is Editor of the

Newsletter of the American Conference for Irish Studies.

Liam Harte is a Lecturer in Irish Studies at St Mary's University College.

Tracey Hill lectures in the Faculty of Humanities at Bath College of Higher Education.

Seán Hutton is the BAIS Chair, Community Development Co-ordinator at the Federation of Irish Societies and writes 'Seo agus Siúd' in *The Irish Post*.

Tony Murray is the administrator of the Irish Studies Centre at the University of North London.

Lance Pettitt is a Senior Lecturer in Irish Studies at St Mary's University College and Convenor of the BAIS Publications Committee.

Isobel Ní Riain has recently completed her doctorate at University College, Cork. She teaches the Irish language at the University of North London and SMUC.

Caít Thompson is an Irish language teacher and convenor of the BAIS Irish Language Committee.

Bernard Tucker is Professor of English at LSU Southampton.

John Woodhurst is a Lecturer at Newark and Sherwood College and Convenor of the BAIS Education Committee.

CALL FOR PAPERS

IRISH ENCOUNTERS: LITERATURE, HISTORY AND CULTURE 1600-1996

3rd Annual Conference at Bath College of HE

5-6 July 1996

Keynote speakers include

Professor Terry Eagleton

The Faculty of Humanities at Bath College of HE and Irish Studies Review are convening an international and interdisciplinary conference on Irish literature, history and culture from 1600-1996. It is our intention to publish the conference proceedings with Sulis Press. For further details contact the Conference Convenors, Alan Marshall, Neil Sammells or Tracey Hill. If you wish to make a contribution, please send a short synopsis for a 20 minute paper by 31 January 1996 to:

Sara Moon, Conference Secretary, Faculty of Humanities, Bath College of HE, Newton Park, Bath BA2 9BN
Tel: 01225-873701 Fax: 01225-872912 e-mail: amarshall@bathhe.ac.uk, smoon@bathhe.ac.uk, thill@bathhe.ac.uk

Musical Finale to Lecture Series at UNL

The public Lecture Series at the Irish Studies Centre of the University of North London ended in grand style on 7 December with a visit by Micheal O Suilleabhain, Professor of Music at Limerick University and founder of the World Music Centre there last year. Professor O Suilleabhain spoke about the work of the centre and accompanied this with a piano recital and video screening. This was a foretaste of his new television series titled 'A River of Sound: The Changing Course of Irish Traditional Music' to be broadcast on BBC television over Christmas. During his talk, he dispelled notions of Irish traditional music being a static art form and looked at how change intermingling with tradition has been central to its vitality.

The rest of the Lecture Series provided a rare and welcome opportunity for academics, students and the general public alike to hear and meet four more of the Republic's most celebrated speakers. Declan Kiberd opened the series with a lively lecture on the theme of his new book *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation*. This was followed by a visit from UCG by the historian Gearoid O Tuathaigh who presented a talk to a packed lecture hall on State Ideology and Popular Culture in Ireland. On 9 November it was the turn of one of Ireland's foremost Irish language poets, Nuala Ni Dhomhnaill, who delivered a warmly received retrospective on women's contribution to twentieth century Irish poetry. The penultimate talk was given by Judge Catherine McGuinness, Chair of the Forum for Peace and Reconciliation during her visit to Britain. The Director of Irish Studies, Dr Mary Hickman, specifically asked Judge McGuinness to address the Irish in Britain as a way of building on a major conference held by the centre on Northern Ireland earlier this year. Her informative account of the work of the Forum stimulated an animated question and answer session with the audience.

With attendance well in excess of one hundred people for all the lectures, the series clearly tapped in to a growing appetite amongst the Irish in Britain for events of this kind and served as a fitting occasion to mark the move of the Irish Studies Centre to the main site of the University at Holloway Road. Dr Hickman warmly thanked the British Council in Dublin for their assistance in funding the series and also the Faculty of Humanities and Teacher Education and the School of

Languages and European Studies at UNL as well as the Irish Embassy for their support. For further information about the work of the Centre contact its Director, Dr Mary Hickman or Mr Tony Murray on 0171-753-5018.

Tony Murray

MA IN IRISH STUDIES UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

This unique and innovative MA introduces students to aspects of 19th and 20th century Irish culture, across a range of media and genres. Students examine a variety of historical and fictional writings, including film, television, mass media, photography and fine art. The aim of the course is to look at Ireland in a national and international context, in relation to Britain, to Europe and to the rest of the world.

The degree structure is interdisciplinary and draws on aspects of social and political history, literary and critical theory and representation studies. The construction of Irish national identities in relation to other forms of identity held in Britain and Ireland is a key feature of the course. Students have the opportunity to read new Irish writing and, through the International Writers Programme, to meet key figures in Irish culture.

HIGHER DEGREES BY RESEARCH IN IRISH STUDIES

Candidates for the M.Phil or Ph.D will normally have completed the MA by coursework in the relevant area of study unless they have equivalent preparation from elsewhere. Supervision is available in a wide range of subjects and interdisciplinary fields. Areas of particular interest to teaching staff include: Contemporary Irish Writing, Gender in Irish Society, 19th century Irish History, 16th and 17th century Ireland: Colonial Perspectives, Revisionism and Representational Studies, Irish Language.

Further particulars and application forms can be obtained from: The Secretary, Centre for British and Comparative Studies, University of Warwick, Coventry CV4 7AL Tel: 01203-523655 Fax: 01203-524468
e-mail: cosab@snow.csv.warwick.ac.uk

Festival of New Irish Cinema 95

24th - 26th November

Riverside Studios and the Irish Centre,
Hammersmith

The range and quality of films screened over the weekend was very impressive and the programme, despite one or two late changes due to distribution problems, included full-length features, animation, new shorts from young directors, North and South, documentaries and Irish-language films too. The Riverside Studios continue to be the main venue but the smaller and more flexible space of the new Hammersmith and Fulham Irish Centre served its purpose well. The films shown here proved popular. Somehow, Ros Scanlon manages to co-ordinate the organisation of this three-day event without losing the personal touch: her achievement and the efforts of her team deserve much praise because the event provides a valuable opportunity for people to see Irish material that might otherwise not be seen. Thanks should also go to the main sponsors, the London Film and Video Development Association, to Hammersmith and Fulham Borough for its support and to Irish Permanent for stepping in to support the launch.

Five films stood out from the rest: Damien O'Donnell's *35 Aside* (1995) was a brilliant half hour story of a boy being bullied at school. It might sound odd but the film was extremely funny if you like an exaggerated, John Waters-type of stylised production. Visually it was inventive and full of surprises. OK, so it ended happily but the during the funny bits you understood the isolation of Philip in his weird,

dysfunctional family. In one hilarious moment, his granny loomed menacingly into view as if on wheels. Orla Walsh confirmed her talent as a director with *Bent out of Shape* (1995) which showed that homophobic bigots still exist in post-1993 Ireland. It is a short tale set in a dodgy video shop. Danny, a young gay punk who works behind the counter, befriends Stephen, a lonely, bullied boy. (Yes, there seemed to be a lot of growing up, male rite of passage films in the festival.) One of the porn-buying customers takes a dislike to Danny because he suspects that he is preying on Stephen and this becomes an excuse for him and his pub mates to gay bash Danny. Stephen stands up to his tormentors and with the girl from the shop next door, they go to visit Danny in hospital. Cathal Black's film of John McGahern's short story *Korea* (1994) was a beautiful-looking film and got right to the heart of the relationship between the father and his seventeen year old son. Mary McGuckian's *Words Upon the Window Pane* (1994) was a class production and the eerie atmosphere of Yeats's play was sustained in the film which offered an innovative perspective on Swift. Thaddeus O'Sullivan's *Nothing Personal* (1995) brought with it considerable controversy, dealing as it did with Loyalist paramilitary killings in 1975. It divided the audience into those who admired it and others who found it offensive and regressive. I wonder if O'Sullivan is satisfied when his films have this effect on audiences? We can look forward to another festival in 1996.

Lance Pettitt

The Irish film festival was launched by Shane Connaughton (right). Ros Scanlon (left), Mayoress of Hammersmith Jacqueline Abbott (centre left) and Caroline Judge (centre front) with her colleagues from Irish Permanent in back row.



Photo Lance Pettitt

Membership and Subscription Rates

Students/Unwaged	£12
Waged	£20
Corporate/Institution	£40

All Overseas Applications should include a £2 supplement to cover our postage costs. If you are sending remittances from outside the UK please make sure that you send it in the form of sterling money order only. Membership runs for twelve months. Members will receive a reminder of renewal prior to membership elapsing.

Only Cheques or standing order arrangement are acceptable (no cash) to:

Dr Tom Dooley (Honorary Treasurer)
British Association of Irish Studies
142, Rydal Crescent
Perivale, Middlesex UR6 8EQ
England

Benefits

- 4 issues of Irish Studies Review (worth £12) posted to you
- 2 issues (Winter, Summer) of the BAIS *Newsletter* posted to you
- Institutional Membership now includes two copies of each *ISR* and *Newsletter* issue
- Communication with a network of nearly 250 members with Irish Studies interests
- Soar Valley Conference Report (annually)

Dates of Forthcoming Council Meetings and the Annual General Meeting

Council Meetings	10th February 1996
	11th May 1996
	13th July 1996

Annual General Meeting and Council Elections	Autumn 1996
---	-------------

Application Form for BAIS

1 (a) New member (tick box) ☐

Please enrol me/my institution as a member of the BAIS or

(b) Renewing Membership (tick box) ☐

Please renew my membership of the BAIS.

I enclose a cheque/order for (tick one box below)

Individual Waged £20 ☐

Student/Unwaged £12 ☐

Institution £40 ☐

2 Preferred title (eg Ms, Dr, Mr, Mrs)

Surname Initials

Address

.....

.....

Town Postcode

Please make cheques or orders (no cash) payable to **BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR IRISH STUDIES.**

4 **STANDING ORDER PAYMENT FOR ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION TO BAIS** (Fill in your details below)

Surname Initials

Address

.....

.....

Town Postcode

To: The Manager Bank plc Branch

Address

.....

.....

Town Postcode

Please pay to the BAIS Deposit Account (No.40196-154) of the AIB Bank, City Branch, Cavendish House, Waterloo Street, Birmingham, B2 5PP, Bank Sort Code 23 / 84 / 87, the sum of £

now and a similar amount on the 1st January each year beginning on the 1st January 1996 at debit of my account

at Bank plc

Address

Postcode Bank Sort Code

This order cancels any previous order which you may hold payable to BAIS.

Signed Date

Send this completed form to:

Dr Tom Dooley, Honorary Treasurer, BAIS, 142, Rydal Crescent, Perivale, UB6 8EQ England

For Office Use Only: Date Received / / 96

British Association of Irish Studies

A Index of Research / Interests of Current Members

If you are a current, paid-up member of BAIS and you are interested in your name appearing in a listing to be included on a regular basis in the BAIS *Newsletter*, please complete the form below and return it to the address shown.

The purpose of the index is to facilitate contact between those members sharing similar interests. The extent of the information you provide is at your own discretion. You need only provide the information you want published. The list will appear in issue 9 (Summer 1996)

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY OR TYPE

Preferred title (eg Ms, Dr, Mr, Mrs)

Surname First Name(s)

Address

.....

Telephone

Fax

e-mail

RESEARCH INTERESTS

.....
.....
.....

TEACHING (indicate level, e.g. Primary, Secondary, FE, Adult, Higher)

.....
.....

OTHER INTERESTS

.....
.....

PUBLICATIONS (no more than 3 items)

.....
.....
.....

Please return this form by 28th March 1996 to:

Dr Lance Pettitt

Centre for Irish Studies

St Mary's University College

Strawberry Hill

Twickenham TW1 4SX

Tel: 0181-240 4090 (direct), 240-4000 (switchboard) Fax: 0181-240 4255 e-mail: Lancep@smuc.demon.co.uk